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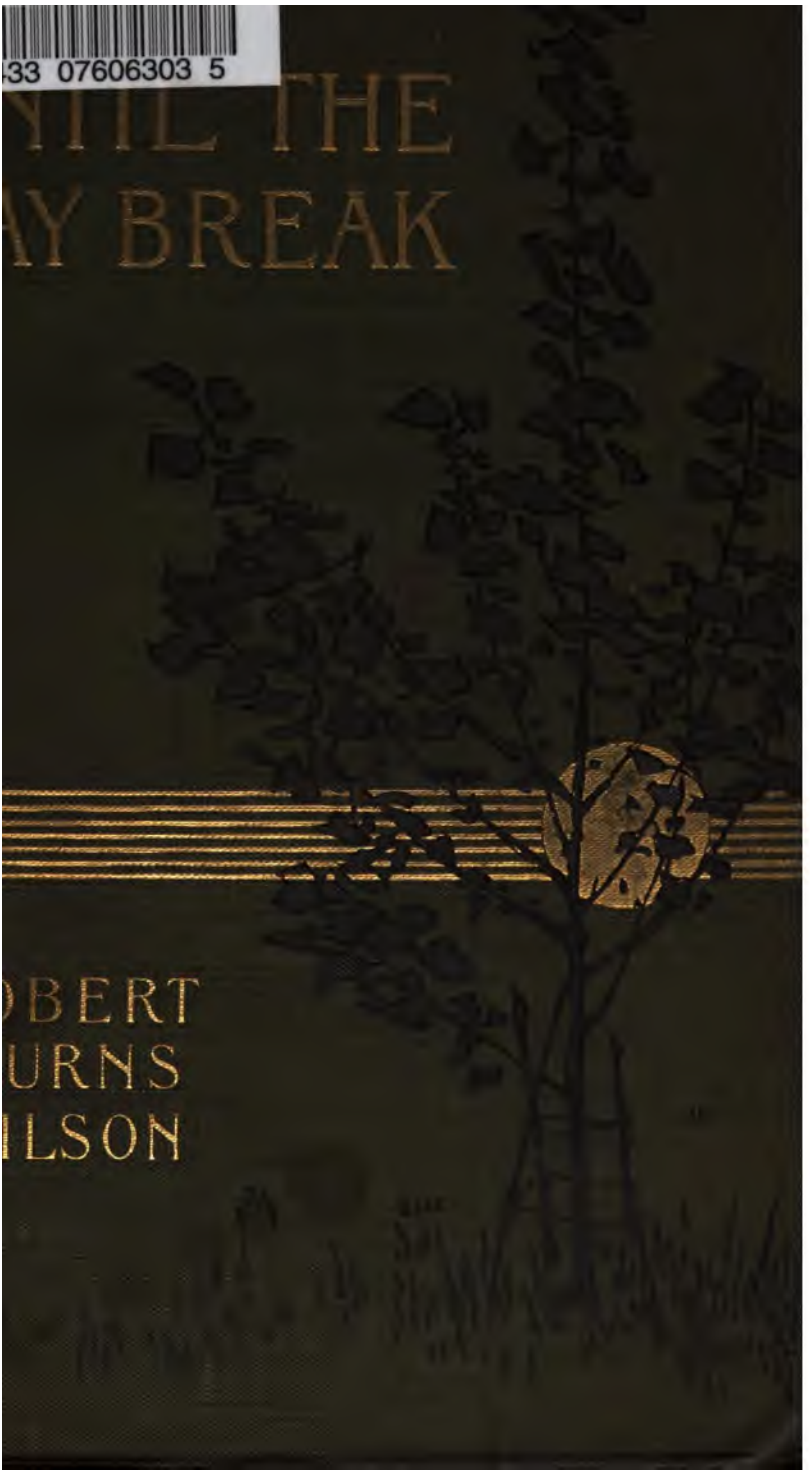

OBERT
URNS
ILSON

Until the Day Break

F

Until the Day Break

A Novel

By

Robert Burns Wilson

"Until the day break, and the shadows flee away, I will get me to the mountain of myrrh, and to the hill of frankincense."
—Song of Solomon.

Charles Scribner's Sons
New York::::::::::::::1900

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UNTIL THE DAY BREAK

PRELUDE

> We are such stuff
> As dreams are made on, and our little life
> Is rounded with a sleep.

THE slow funeral pyre of the dead summer had dwindled to a few late-glowing embers. The fires which had burned through three moons upon the changing autumn hills with almost unwaning glories, were at last smouldering into ashes.

It was late November. A spirit of pleasing melancholy pervaded nature throughout, and the silent earth seemed, not unhappily, listening to "the low persistent requiem of the rain." If the drabbled and restless spirits of discontent, which wander about in all seasons, came to stand without the windows of Mrs. Winchell's sitting-room, or even to press their pallid faces against the tearful panes, they did not seem to enter. All within was suffused in a warm glow of comfort, comfort and quiet such as never enter the abode of ignorance or squalid misery, nor

the homes where fashion and the folly of ostentation have been allowed to break down the boundaries of good taste. If any fault were to be found with Mrs. Winchell's sitting-room, one might say it had an over-tone of intellectual refinement. The little quick-witted looking clock upon the mantel-piece, the bronze figures at its either side, the candlesticks, the portraits on the wall, the very chairs, seemed to be thinking, quietly but busily. Even the perfect and intricate geometrical figures in pale gold upon the olive ground of the wall-paper seemed to concentrate their attention upon you, and to be calmly surveying the smallness of your intellect, insomuch that you felt compelled to think with all your might to assert in your own mind your presumed right to be an individual; and then you would blush as you imagined everything about you was smiling in some occult inanimate way while listening to your awkward thoughts, stumbling upon the stairway of consciousness.

It was evident that some intense spirit had left an impress there which had not yet worn away.

Mrs. Winchell and her son Arthur sat before the drowsy fire. A round table, whose deep crimson cover was almost hidden by tastefully arranged books and periodicals, and flooded with the light of a large globe-lamp which rose

from the centre of it, was drawn up before them to fill a broken circle. Among the books upon the table were five elegantly bound volumes of essays, mostly upon philosophical and psychological subjects, one of which Arthur Winchell had been reading and now held carelessly half closed, resting it upon his knee and gazing absently beyond into the fire. The book was bound in morocco of a deep maroon color, and ornamented with gold deeply stamped into the yielding leather. It was such binding as one loves to handle caressingly; feeling the charm of expressed thought entering at the finger-tips, deriving an exquisite sense of contact with the spirit of the pages within. Upon the back of the book in question was engraved, or stamped in gold rather, the image of a strange-looking flower, upon which the light from the lamp fell at such an angle that it shone in the half gloom with startling intensity.

The brilliant gleam attracted Arthur Winchell's attention and seemed to recall him out of his revery. Holding the book up before him and bringing it so as to vary the light upon it, he fell to studying the clear-cut engraving of the flower, as he had done, perhaps, a thousand times before.

"Mother," he said, presently, "this picture has a strange fascination for me. I wish I could have seen the real flower. It seems, sometimes,

that I have seen it somewhere, in dreams, maybe. Did father never find but that one?"

"Never but that one," said Mrs. Winchell, musingly. "He had the picture of it engraved and printed on all his books."

Letting her hands fall listlessly in her lap, where they nestled in the snowy fabric with which they had been busy, Mrs. Winchell leaned her head back in her chair and rocked herself slightly, thinking with closed eyes.

"I still have the one from which that was made," she said, slowly. "I do not think that gives the shape of the real flower very well. The one they copied was pressed and had been dead and dry for a long time."

"Could you guess the color?" said Arthur.

"No, it was faded entirely. Nothing left but ashen gray; your father said it was purple; I think purple and white mingled, like a passion-flower, something.

"There is a very strange history connected with that flower, Arthur," she continued, leaning forward and looking across the table at her son. "A very strange story; I will tell you all about it some day soon; I would have told you long ago, but——"

"But what, mother?" For she did not go on.

"But for the fear of awakening—I mean, for the fear of the possible effect of it upon you. I hope, Arthur dear, you will never develop men-

tal tendencies which I fear you have to some degree inherited from your father. I could even wish you might never have any inclination to literature; there is so much unhappiness, so many disappointments that seem inseparable from all literary aspirations. I am almost glad you have not seemed ambitious in that way. Your poor father was very unhappy."

Arthur Winchell looked down and fingered nervously the pages of the book he held. He was conscious that a confused expression of guilt might be stealing over his face. He felt his mother's look fixed intently upon him. "Mother dear," he said, and leaning forward, he took up the poker, spearing the coals upon the fire in an embarrassed fashion, "I have written a story." Then turning, he caught the anxious, loving look which questioned him. "I hardly know that I intended it for publication when I wrote it. Perhaps I had some thoughts of sending it somewhere to surprise you with it, if it should come out at all.

"I would like to read it to you now, though, and have you tell me just what you think of it. I only wrote it at night, you know—not to waste any time," he continued, rather inconsistently, and in a very low tone; for he was recalling the hours of feverish thought in his quiet room when all the house was asleep, the bright lamp, the oft-relighted pipe, the writings and

rewritings, the beginnings without number, the flutters of hope, the lapses of despair, and the final outcome which only brought at last a dreary sense of disappointment and vague regret which he could neither account for nor shake off. With these recollections thronging upon him he stared steadily into the fire, nervously smoothing his temple with the tips of his fingers.

"Just like your father," said his mother, in a voice which trembled slightly, but which was like music to hear. She arose and laid her work upon the table. "Just like your father," she repeated, softly, and coming across, she stood behind Arthur's chair, looking down with moist eyes. He reached back, and taking her hands in his, drew them about his neck and kissed them alternately. Both were silent a long time. In that deep love what need for words?

"He was very unhappy," she continued, her thoughts going back to other days. "Very unsatisfied and wretched; he always read everything to me before sending it to be published. I could never criticise, I could only give him my sympathy. His own arguments seemed to depress him greatly, and he would often declare there was little use in writing anything; strange contradiction, he was always calling himself a fool for trying to be wise; giving himself no rest night or day in his untiring search after strange and hidden knowledge, he would still assert

that the hope of happiness for man depended largely upon his ability to remain in ignorance of the truth."

"But he was always kind-hearted, mother, was he not?" said Arthur; "he didn't allow these things to change him in any way?"

"Oh, no, no," she answered, quickly; "he was tender and loving always. More than once I have listened to his cold analysis of some subject which we had invested with a halo of sentiment or sanctity until all near approach to it seemed cut off; but he would shred it to its original fibres and hold it up before our startled eyes with the triumph of a god that feared nothing. Yet the exercise of this power brought only a transient happiness which seemed to vanish with the moment. This was at the lectures he used to give. After, when we were sitting alone before the fire at home, he would lean his head upon my breast and weep like a child, his temples burning as with a fever, and his hands cold as ice. Then it was I used to bring him comfort by re-asserting my faith in our primitive beliefs, or by reading some story of childish trust in things which wise men laugh at; sorrowfully, and in our long talks he would always end by saying: 'Margaret, dear, this is best, best for us all.' Yes, Arthur, your father was always, always gentle and loving, but he fretted his life away with what he called to the last, his foolish wisdom."

After some moments of silence, Arthur arose, and kissing his beautiful mother fondly, went away to bring the manuscript of his story, on which, in spite of himself, he had builded some hope.

When he had gone Mrs. Winchell took up the volume he had been reading, and sinking into a chair, leaned upon the table, tenderly turning the leaves back to the title-page. Once more she read the dedication. Then turning to another page she looked long and lovingly upon the engraved portrait there, with the familiar autograph under it, the same she had read with happier eyes at the close of many a love-letter addressed to her.

It was a refined, handsome face, clean-shaven and pale, the dark hair carelessly pushed back from the temples. The eyes deep-set under a clear, smooth brow, seemed lighted with a half defiant gleam, the slightly aquiline nose and square, firm chin added to the determined cast of the face, but the mouth wore an expression of ineffable tenderness; gentleness, sadness, and painful sensitiveness spoke in every curve and line of the lips. Tears gathered in her eyes as she gazed on the face before her. "So young," she murmured, "so young and so unhappy." She closed the book hastily, drying her eyes, for she heard Arthur's steps upon the stair.

"Here it is, mother," he said as he entered.

"I hope you can give me some encouragement, but I want you to say just what you really think about it."

He drew the chair his mother had just quitted up nearer to the fire, and laid the manuscript upon the table. "There was no trouble getting the material," he went on; "the whole thing came into my mind without effort, almost without thought, but I have had much trouble in getting it all arranged and expressed. I can't guess how it is going to sound, but I believe I cannot make it any better."

Mrs. Winchell had resumed her seat and prepared to listen. Arthur busied himself for a little while putting fresh coals upon the grate and arranging the lamp nearer his side of the table, then taking up his manuscript with a very unsuccessful assumption of careless ease, began to read, in a voice which, even to himself, sounded in an unnatural key, the following story, which he had entitled "Until the Day Break."

PART ONE

A DREAM AND A FORGETTING

For man also knoweth not his time: as the fishes that are taken in an evil net, and as the birds that are caught in the snare so are the sons of men snared, in an evil time, when it falleth suddenly upon them.

Oh, I have passed a miserable night!
So full of ugly sights—of ghastly dreams—
That, as I am a faithful, Christian man,
I would not spend another such a night
Though 'twere to buy a world of happy days;
So full of dismal terrors was the time.

JOHN LUBBOCK had just left his home to go to his place of business. The pleasant side-street along which he walked had become to him an outlying portion of his life. Its familiar features had come to reflect, in some indefinable fashion, the moods and desires which possessed him; vain reachings out of the life within, which never came to anything, insomuch that he often fell to wondering what they were meant for and what really did become of them.

He had walked the same side of the street for more than ten years, moving at much the same

easy pace, thinking almost the same thoughts, bound on the same journey, and at about the same time of the day. Nothing had ever happened to break up, for long, the pleasing monotony, nor did anything seem at all likely to happen.

He struck, from time to time, with his light cane, at the whirling seeds which fell like living things, fluttering down from the branches above; for it was May, and the spreading maples which lined the streets were brave in living green, and the winged seeds fell in showers and completely covered the pavements.

Perhaps, as they rustled down and playfully tapped on the rounded dome of John Lubbock's ridiculous derby hat, they served to recall to him the times long ago, when he would have been filling his pockets with the greenest of them to pinch them in the faces of his playmates. They didn't call them the winged seeds of the white water-maple then, but simply "squirters." At all events, when one tapped more loudly than usual, he smiled under his stiff beard, so that his face visibly shortened, emphasizing the crow's-foot lines which radiated from the converging point until each eye seemed a good momentary representation of sunrise as Holbein would have engraved it.

John Lubbock lived with a married sister, and was the youngest and leanest of what was

known, at home, as the "fat firm" of Pritchard, Farley, and Lubbock, publishers. Ruy Harringford used to say, "Such a trio in leaf gold on the binding of any literary work, was a dead weight which no buoyancy of style known to aspiring print could possibly overcome;" and once when one of his books hung fire in the market, Lubbock having twitted him respecting it, he retorted, "You couldn't catch any fish even with attar of roses on your bait, John, you have too many sinkers on your line, and they keep your hook in the mud. You ought, in all conscience, to leave off that last one; that's death to any effort."

Lubbock was thinking of Ruy Harringford at this moment, and reflecting with some bitterness on his long absence. Harringford had been away on his wanderings more than two years, no one knew where; he had seemed to drop out of life, so far as he himself was concerned. True, the "fat firm" had in that time published three small volumes for him, two made up of compactly written sketches and essays, mostly on nature, and one story, a rather strong piece of imaginary work, Lubbock thought, which had quite a run, despite the "sinkers."

But let me describe John Lubbock and have done. He was about forty, a little above the medium in stature, and would have been described as "heavy set," if not fat. He was

dressed in a gray business suit, and wore a full beard of tawny brown, close trimmed, as was his hair. His eyes were "yearning" blue, and he was a bachelor. He walked like one whose life holds no great expectances, and as to his abilities, Harringford hit him off as "a man of huge intentions but of small performance." One thing was certain, a kinder heart, or a truer, to friends or an honest purpose, never beat in the breast of man.

After walking a few blocks along the shady street, Lubbock stopped in front of a large, rather dingy-looking brick house set back from the street, with a side-ground of considerable area; a retreating sweep of green all dappled with sunlight and shadows under the overarching of tall locust-trees whose interlacing boughs were heavy with snowy blossoms. Beyond, through the rough green-lichened trunks, one could catch glimpses of a high vine-covered brick wall, and beyond that lay a great garden which should have been called a wilderness, but it was a most pleasing, pathetic wilderness, a woven and tangled remembrance of bygone glories; a garden where the cucumber magnolia had shaded alike the melon, vine, and the dark-red rose; where the plum-tree dropped her unripe fruit upon the marble steps leading down to the neglected terrace, and on the lower ground the drooping branches of the great weeping-willow had swayed

against the tasselled corn. The place was a soul's paradise to Harry Ainsworth, and the arched way into it, with its rusting iron gate, shadowed by mock-orange trees, had no angel to forbid an entrance. Within that garden Ainsworth was wont to feed his mind with as much zest as though its fruits had been forbidden, though each tree was to him a veritable tree of knowledge. He was at this time the sole arbiter of destinies in the deserted mansion, which was known thereabout, familiarly, as the "Old Harringford House." It will be almost superfluous to add that the house was reputed haunted.

In front, the lawn was enclosed from the street by a low iron fence of ancient design. An aged negro woman, who had just finished with the huge stone step at the door, was now on her hands and knees scrubbing the well-worn bricks in the paved way which led to the gate, until they seemed to glow with newly aroused circulation. John Lubbock leaned on the low fence and coughed slightly.

"Howdy, Mist' Jawn," said the wrinkled old dame, drawing herself quickly to a more human-like position, and looking over her shoulder without rising.

"Howdy, Aunt Huldy," said John; "would you mind asking Mr. Ainsworth to come down to the door a minute?"

"Mist' Ainsworth? you'll fin' him right dar,

Mist' Jawn, 'creering round in de gyarden dar; en dey ain't no good a cummin' fum hit, nuther, ketchin' dem yar buttahflies en a killin' um wid dat intment, no dey ain't. I just done say so to Mist' Ainsworth, but shoo!—he ain't no mo' mind me den one dem June-bugs dat he done got stickin' on cawd-bode up in de room dar; hit's plum owdacious, dat's what hit is!"

"But, aunty, he is a scientist, you know, and——"

"Scientisses. What's scientisses? Cawn't anybody knowd what de buttahfly was 'fo de scientisses done ketch um wid dat intment en stucked um up on de cawd-bode? Cawn't dey tole de blue buds putty fo' dey's jammed full ob cotton en jounced onto a wire with glass beads whar dey eyes was, en—en dey cyouldn't sing no chune ef de sun war a stannin' still en waitin' fo' it. No dey cyouldn't, dat dey cyouldn't, um—um! scientisses *en* scientisses ef *yo* like, but dey ain't no good comin' fum it; no whar, nur no how. I'se done got plum feared fo' to stay in de house, dat's what I is. Ain't de good Lawd done say dat no sparrar ain't gwine to fall to de yuth 'thout him takin' notice? en ee ain't gwine ter fergit all dem sparrars and buttahflies en—en—June-bugs what Mist' Ainswuth done 'stroyed up dar, *no ee ain't!*" And therewith Aunt Huldy fell upon the dirty face of an unsuspecting brick with such a scouring as wellnigh lifted it from its bed.

"Mister Ruy is coming before long, aunty," said Lubbock, slowly.

Aunt Huldy sat bolt upright and dropped her scrubbing-brush, which fell on its back, and lay there, a bristling picture of unregarded misery.

"Wal, gr'et day in de mornin'! Wat's yo' sayin', honey? My Lawd! Marse Ruy done cumin'? when he done gwine get hyar?"

"I can't tell you that exactly; he'll be here before long, though, that's certain."

"Wall, gr'et-*ness;* I'se plum glad fo' dat, dat I is; 'kase I done bin sho nuff skeered 'bout dem June-bugs en sparrers up dar—'deed I is, Mist' Jawn; en I kin reckleck yit sump'n dat Marse Ruy say fo' he done went gambastin' ovah de face of de yuth. He 'low dat dey was mo' gumption in de wabble of a blue-bird dan all de sientisses in de worl'. I disremember now if 'twar gumption—anyways, 'twar sump'n way off yonder—didn't b'long to de yuth, nohow; but, my Lawd, ef he's cumin,' hit looks like dat dar's plenty got to be looked to, sho." And once more, *sans* ceremony, the scrubbing-brush was going through its paces in a fashion that must have obliterated effectually any lingering recollections of neglect.

At that moment a young man, bare-headed and flushed from exercise, darted around the corner of the house in mad pursuit of a large butterfly,

which he succeeded in bringing down with his net before it could escape into the street.

"Hello, you loitering sinner, good-morning to you, you'll excuse me, my lord," he said, breathlessly, kneeling down and placing one knee on the handle of the net to keep the hoop close to the ground. "Just a moment and then I'll come till ye, my lad." He took a rather large bottle from the left breast-pocket of his coat and drew the cork with his teeth. Leaning closely and eagerly over the net, and pressing down the fatal meshes until he had his beautiful prisoner quiet, he applied, with the tip of his forefinger, a drop of the deadly chloroform, the "intment" which was Aunt Huldy's continual text. There was a shudder or two, only, and the divine creature, so full of life and happiness but a moment before, was dead. Replacing the bottle in the same pocket, Ainsworth, for it was he, drew from another pocket a small square of perforated card-board, to which he quickly secured the butterfly with an invisible piece of wire, and there it was, ready for the use of the "scientisses."

"There is something in the construction of this iris which interests me," he said, fastening the card-board to his lapel in a professional way, and indicating one of the eyes on the wing from which all motion had gone.

"Well, hang me, Ainsworth," said Lubbock,

who had silently watched the performance with a lugubrious countenance, "hang me if I don't agree with Aunty Huldy; that's a villanous thing to do, science or no science."

This brought an ecstatic grunt from Aunt Huldy, which she followed by an absent-minded scouring of one unfortunate brick that must have bewildered its idea of even-handed justice throughout the rest of its existence.

Ainsworth acknowledged both expressions of opinion with a good-natured smile. "True—true, for both of you, my good friends; but, Lubbock, my dear fellow, don't be depressed, it's only on a par with the general movement. Everything rounds up to about the same thing at the last, you know; how is it

> The dew is on the lotus. Rise great sun
> And lift my leaf and mix me with the wave;
> *Om mani padme hum*, the sunrise comes,
> The dew-drop slips into the shining sea."

"Well said, my boy—very well said; that is exceeding beautiful; but while you were in that neighborhood you might have quoted Buddha himself, and I think perhaps, more to the purpose:

> Kill not, for pity's sake, and lest ye slay
> The meanest thing upon its upward way."

Ainsworth glanced down at the dead wonder a moment, and continued, half regretfully, "Its

upward way! I wish I could think it. But, my dear Lubbock, the upward way must continue in the offspring; this creature must be what it is; and, besides, if it was a good butterfly—which no doubt it was—it will have already provided for all that. You should know that some tender stem is even now, somewhere, bulging with a growing grub which is perhaps interfering with some plant's life upon *its* upward way. In taking this life I have, after all, only done what nature was intending a little later; am I less kind? But I toss you back a counter compliment, my serious-minded friend—and I warn you, I am about to turn my attention to worms—book-worms, especially—those comfortable fellows who wriggle along the bookshelf of life and grow fat on the mulberry-leaves of literature, winding themselves up in such a cocoon of fine-spun, silken quotations that even the keen probe of science has so far failed to—to a—" he stooped quickly and plucked up a flower from the grass. His ever-watchful eyes had detected a small insect entering it, and he deftly imprisoned the luckless adventurer with his thumb and finger—"failed, I say, as yet to find their use, exactly, in our present accepted cosmogony."

"Oh, well, heaven mend you, my friend, and, in the meantime, have a care that the worm does not take occasion to turn his attention to you.

Your worm is your only emperor for diet, you know: 'We fat all creatures else to fat us, we fat ourselves for maggots; your——'"

"Hold, hold," said Ainsworth, with unusual gayety, "I'll finish your quotation for you; 'your fat publisher and your lean author—two dishes but to one table, there's the end.' I say, John, my dear child, get you to your shelf, you are too musty for this world, you smack of mould and ancient rime. You are too good to like anything original—even original sin. You are a sorrowful realization; you have a depressing tangibility about you which suggests the unlooked-for materialization of some unhappy ideal. I wish Ruy Harringford were here, he could apostrophize you as you deserve."

"Harringford, yes; that's what I came by for; I wanted to ask you about him. Have you heard when he is coming?"

"Well! by Jove! I can't accuse you of suddenness with your question," said Ainsworth, "but I suppose anything must even moderate its pace when it moves with you. I expect Ruy in a week or two—though he has not answered my letter as yet, but I know he will come."

"Well, save your spice for the unregenerate; you'll be lamb-like enough when he gets here," said Lubbock—"and good-by to you, my dying gladiator, your bachelor days are nearly at an end. I may get a glimpse of an angel; and if

I do, may I say you are looking remarkably well? I trust you will uphold the dignity of your profession at the last. Good-by."

John was walking away—rather briskly for him. Ainsworth stood looking after him half wistfully, nervously pinching to pieces the flower he had plucked up. Suddenly he raised his arms above his head, while a violent tremor shook his whole frame.

"John," he called, in a faint, shrill voice.

Lubbock turned, looked at him for an instant, and hurried back. Ainsworth had staggered a step or two, and was leaning heavily against the fence. His face was deadly pale, and his outstretched hand, which Lubbock grasped between his own warm palms, was icy cold.

"Why, Harry, old fellow, what's this?" he said, his voice thick and strange sounding, for his big heart was in his throat, half choking his utterance. "How are you ill? What happened——"

"I am not ill—it's gone now—whatever it was—you see—I don't know what to think, exactly." He put his hand on Lubbock's shoulder, and straightened himself up. "Do you believe there can be such things as presentiments, John?" he asked, half smiling.

"Presentiments—no—yes — well, that is—I hardly know—many people think so, but I

doubt it," Lubbock answered. "Why, have you had one?"

"Yes," said Ainsworth, looking serious again. "If there are such things, at all, I think I have. A momentary vision that came and passed away in a flash, but more inconceivably appalling than anything I have ever dreamed of. It has shaken me completely. What do you suppose could be the cause for such a thing?"

"I can't see," said Lubbock; "but what was the trouble—was anything really presented?"

"No, nothing defined at all—some unknown terror, but none the less real. However, it was gone before I could grasp it. Perhaps the soul understands even where the intellect fails. Anyway, it is just as I tell you. I never felt anything so frightful."

"It's queer," said Lubbock. "You are sure your heart's sound?"

"Perfectly. I never had any trouble in my life."

"Well, I want you to stop racing around the way you do with your head bare. Your heart may be all good, as you say, but there's no telling what effect the sun may have on your pumpkin head, do you hear? Now you go up to your room and stay there, and no more of this foolishness—scaring a man's life out in broad daylight. Are you sure you feel perfectly well again?"

"Oh, yes—yes, indeed. I tell you it wasn't physical at all. There's no touch of it left; it all seems like foolishness now; but, John, I feel as though I had lived years since you said good-by. I wish you would stop in as you come home; will you?"

"Yes, I will," said Lubbock, pressing his hand heartily, "and now do as I tell you—go to your room and rest up; you've broken my day completely, confound you. I have promised Evelyn to watch over you until you are safe in her care, and I will. Good-by," he added, pressing Ainsworth's hand with some emotion.

Ainsworth stood smiling, his face flushed and his eyes alight with the fires of youth and perfect health.

"Yes," he said, "I trust there's no danger."

Evelyn Weir was one of the loveliest girls in that Southern city noted for the beauty of its daughters.

Young, rich, accomplished—gifted, even—she was to be Harry Ainsworth's wife within a fortnight. Ruy Harringford, his life-long friend, was to be his best man, and John Lubbock—dear, fat John—was to give the bride away; for she was an orphan, living with an aunt, by marriage, a widowed lady, who seldom left her house.

All was arranged. They would have a little

"run" somewhere. Ruy would be home to stay, and would live in the old house, with Aunt Huldy to care for him.

Ainsworth's heart sat lightly in his bosom. He felt a glow of pardonable vanity; for was not Evelyn proud of his intellect, and what might he not achieve with her love to aid and inspire him? The vision of sweet days stretched out before him. He turned and ran gayly across the lawn, sprang over the flower-border on to the clean pavement, and stood on the door-step. "Aunty," he said, almost tenderly, taking some money from his pocket, "you have always taken good care of me, and now I want you to take this and spread a little dinner for yourself and your friends—have some good wine and just drink a glass to my good health and long life, won't you—long life and happiness?" He gave her the money, turned into the hall and ran lightly up the stairs.

Aunt Huldy looked after him a moment, and then at the silver which lay on her wrinkled palm, and lifting her coarse apron, she wiped the tears harshly from her poor dimmed eyes.

"Dar now, bless *me!* wat I go 'busin' dat chile fo'? Hit looks lak I hain't got no 'ligion left, ner raisin nuther. Ef ee des *would* stop cu'in dem June-bugs an' buttahflies up, ee's de bestes man in de whole yuth."

The scrubbing went on for a little time longer, and then Aunt Huldy, crooning all the while a disconsolate hymn "chune," took up her bucket and brushes and made her way to the back of the house.

John Lubbock continued on his way, eying the pavement in the front of him abstractedly as he walked. From time to time he reached up and lifted his hat partly from his brow, only to pull it down closer to his eyes, a habit with him when inwardly disturbed, an involuntary seeking of mechanical aid to concentration of thought. Unconsciously, his outward actions gave unerring indication of his mental state. He carried his walking-stick closely pressed high up under his left arm, his steps were quick and of uneven length, and his whole manner unusual. Ainsworth's strange distemper puzzled him, and brought to mind some of Harringford's theories about presentiments.

Arrived at the next corner he stepped to the curb and looked up the street for a car. Just then he heard his name called by a very small voice, and turned to find a slender-necked, pathetic-looking little boy holding out a soiled note, so soiled that it must have been carried some time. The story of a long, hot journey was printed on it with the little finger-marks. Instinctively, John Lubbock's hand sought his vest pocket, for, slow of movement himself, he

had a quick and perhaps exaggerated sympathy —often noticeable in stout persons—respecting those who are compelled to bear up against the horrors of fatigue. It was with a pleased surprise that John Lubbock beheld the tattered youth before him made suddenly radiant by the possession of unlooked-for wealth, and gazed after him in absolute bewilderment as he scudded out of sight, borne away on newly inspired legs.

The note was from Ruy Harringford asking Lubbock to come to him. He was in the city at the hotel. Lubbock was greatly astonished. A carriage was not to be found at once in that out-of-the-way part of the city, and it was with a vague sense of uneasiness and impatience that he climbed into the slow street-car, trying to resign himself to the imposed delay. Naturally he fell to picturing his meeting with his friend, whose long absence had been a puzzle to him. He expected to find him changed, but how? He sat looking out of the open car in an absent way, and fell to guessing. He was destined to find more of a change than he thought for. In his boyhood Ruy Harringford had been supposed to be subject to the eternal vigilance of a certain savage uncle, who brought him up in a manner to make him covet liberty at any price; but as he was never under that old gentleman's baleful eye when he could escape it—which was

pretty often, the eternal vigilance not being, by any means, confined to one side—Ruy's subjugated condition had no real existence except in the mistaken fancy of the old man's mind, which fancy was itself somewhat shaken at last by the appearance of a letter post-marked Liverpool, England, from which city his nephew had just started to foot it over Scotland, when at that very moment he was thought to be surveying for a certain turnpike company in the adjoining county.

There were trials and dangers innumerable, heart-longings and home-sicknesses — dark, dreary days and long strugglings against misfortunes, through which the brave spirit battled to achieve at least some measure of success.

The savage old gentleman read from time to time Ruy's letters to the press and learned to feel a kind of ill-natured pride in their author, and Ruy was somewhat astonished to find he had left him the "Old Harringford House" for a possession, until he found that it had resulted from the dear old gentleman's desire for a last consolation in the way of an unexpected disappointment to some relatives who had crowded —a little over-confidently—his irascible deathbed.

The old house, however, proved to Ruy an inheritance which did not enrich him. First he wrote and placed it in the hands of an agent,

who rented it to all sorts of people, and at last, hearing of Harringford's return, departed with all he had collected of rents, as is, at times, the manner of agents.

When Harringford returned he brought with him the companion of all his travels and trials, Harry Ainsworth, and they, too, made their abode in the old house, with Aunt Huldy, the uncle's old servant and the ministering angel of Ruy's stormy youth, to keep house and "care" for them. Ruy's father had died in the house before he could remember, and the property had gone to his uncle for debt. There was, too, the story of some long-ago tragedy connected with the place, which legend Aunt Huldy had often detailed with the exaggeration and relish for dark doings which distinguish her race.

It was at this time, while pursuing their studies together, and at the same time earning their living with their pens, that Harringford and Ainsworth became acquainted with Evelyn Weir. Harringford fell deeply in love with her at once, but he was not sanguine. He thought he saw plainly her preference for Ainsworth, and manfully tried to smother out his own torturing passion. He gave no sign and Ainsworth suspected nothing of the soul's hidden tragedy when Harringford determinedly set his foot on his heart's hope and tore himself away from the sight of her who seemed to him the living em-

bodiment of all that could be desired in life. A realized ideal, a beautiful image, which haunted him wherever he turned, like a lovely but cruel angel. And in the bitter years which followed, when Ainsworth's letters to his self-exiled friend would be telling of the priceless gift of Evelyn's love, which he had won, or containing perhaps a "message" from "her" begging him to come back soon and sending "her love;" then he could not see the bowed head, nor the letter crushed in the convulsed fingers, nor hear the moans which shook the strong frame as the lonely heart cried out in fierce anguish against the cruelty of destiny while the old battle was fought over once more.

Thus the dreary days went on for Harringford until two wretched years had worn themselves away. He had been miserable, but not idle. Far from the din of the world's busy ways he had hidden himself, and amidst the quiet of fair fields and the dreamy solitude of summer woodlands, he had sought for peace and comfort, and although rest could not come to him he learned truly to love the music of the streams, and the nameless children of the forest grew to seem like friends as he threaded the fragrant and shadowy pathways.

But often the heart-breaking song of some familiar bird would awake the old despair and wring his memory-haunted heart as with the

gripe of death. Then it would be that he would sink down upon some mossy bank, digging his fingers into the yielding ground, the hot tears blurring all the shimmering, sun-lit vale below him; while the bright-eyed songsters flitted about among the silken green leaves near at hand, curiously eying the strange huge creature that had thus invaded that sacred retreat.

Thus passed the slow hours and days and months, each big with unrecorded sorrows. Alone, among the quiet country-folk, whose ways had grown grateful to him, for, as though informed by some fine instinct, they seemed to know, and never trouble him, his hours were all his own, and for want of employment they began to grow unbearable. It was then he wrote the little romance which at once caused a murmur of approbation and gave to his name a new and unexpected value. But he heard but little of it all. Sometimes a letter reached him which caused a bitter smile, but Lubbock's letter of sincere and hearty congratulation awakened a transient glow of satisfaction, almost of pride and ambition. "You have put your soul into it and they see it," John wrote. And he had. Then came Ainsworth's request for his attendance at his prospective marriage. A request which he had been expecting with a kind of terror, but he pulled himself together, trying bravely to patch up a semblance of his old de-

parted gayety of manner and came home, came before he had intended, before he was expected indeed, as Ainsworth said.

The cause for this sudden move will appear in what follows here.

When John Lubbock took his seat in the darkened, silent-moving elevator of the hotel, he felt in some vague way, as the door was shut and the machine began its mysterious movement, that here was a fitting emblem of that strange compelling power which we call destiny. Let the passengers sit or stand, look at each other or read, be composed or uneasy, careful or thoughtless, laugh or weep, no matter, they are carried on to their destined landing. And though they might think of doing so, they will not step out until the door be opened. Heavy heart or light weighs no more nor no less. Human joy or sorrow will not disturb the hidden force which acts with the same noiseless precision, whatever be the emotions that distract the beings which are thus borne along, and when the appointed place is reached, there is nothing for the helpless soul to do but—

"Third floor!"

The phrase, uttered in low, well-bred tones by a languid sphinx in faultless attire, put a period to Lubbock's philosophizing. The open-work iron door slid back, and, rising, he followed the

porter out into the limitless regions of carpets, oil-cloth and white paint, thus by his own action finishing out his interrupted line of thought. Perhaps few things are more depressing than our tame submission to the mechanical associations of human life.

We follow a star or a lackey with equal enthusiasm, as the surrounding conditions demand or permit; and usually, perhaps, with a preponderance of hope in favor of the latter.

Lubbock followed his guide along the hall's dismal length, sniffing ill-naturedly the inevitable hotel atmosphere.

"Ruy Harringford has lost his senses," he thought. "I can't understand it—it's not like him to coop himself up all day in one of these labelled sepulchres."

Just then the apparition ahead of him stopped. "This is his number," he said, as though indicating the den of some registered animal.

Lubbock's mental comment was appropriate, but need not be recorded. He knocked softly on the door.

"Come," said a voice that was as resonant and melodious as the deep note of a violoncello.

Lubbock opened the door.

The figure which arose before him was very tall, very stately, almost majestic. It was Harringford—but changed—oh, *how* changed! There was the same half-haughty uplifting of the whole

frame, the same broad shoulders and ample chest, the same admirable poise and adjustment of parts, the same symmetry and native grace which had so often made Lubbock recall Hamlet's speech about the paragon of animals; there was no physical breaking up, but a strange pallor sat upon the face, like a supernatural light, and the eyes—which had always seemed like deep wells in which star-images were twinkling—overflowing fountains of hope from which mirth bubbled continually, appeared now as though the unhappy soul leaned forward and looked out through them, steadily, hopelessly, as might a woman watch through her window for one who will never return. They burned with painful brilliancy, and were fixed upon Lubbock's own with a look of speculative intensity that thrilled him to speechlessness and pierced his heart as with a flaming shaft. A thousand swift sensations of self-accusing regret went through his mind like lightning, and when he saw the unnatural attempt of his friend to smile, he felt the stinging tears forcing their way into his vision.

Their hands met in a prolonged, convulsive clasp.

Strange creatures we are: had Lubbock given utterance to the words which arose to his lips, he would have said:

"Merciful God, Harringford, what has come

to you? what can I do?" What he really did say was: "Why, Ruy, my dear boy, I am glad to see you looking so well."

Well, perhaps it is best so! We are never deceived by it, but we like it no less. The fact was, Lubbock, for the moment, was shocked out of his senses.

"I got your note just a little while ago. I had stopped to ask Ainsworth about——"

"Ainsworth?—you have seen him then?" Harringford interrupted quickly.

"Yes."

"When? Is he well?"

"Only an hour ago——"

"And he is alive and well?"

"Alive—yes, indeed; of course he is alive, and well, too, I should say; I never saw him better!"

"Well, thank God!" said Harringford, as he pushed a chair toward Lubbock and sank down in his own; "thank God for that at least." He leaned forward, resting his elbow on the little table which stood beside him, and on which a waiter containing his untouched breakfast still remained, covered with a large napkin.

"Look here, Ruy," said Lubbock, lifting the white cloth, "you are ill, you have eaten nothing, and it is afternoon; you haven't even drunk your coffee; everything is cold as a stone. What are you trying to do with yourself, anyway, stay-

ing away two whole years and never letting us know where, then coming back and cooping yourself up in this beggarly cell of perdition?" Lubbock was on his mettle now. "Why didn't you come to us, or let us know when you were coming? Where did you get that look? Was there an accident on the railroad? I am going to have some wine sent up here; you must get out of this."

"No accident, no—nothing; never mind the wine, John—wait—I'll drink this coffee. We'll go after a little; wine fails to cheer as it is famed to do. You have relieved me greatly—about Ainsworth. What I want to know, at once, John, is whether everybody is well—Ainsworth—Evelyn—Aunt Huldy?

"Yes, all of them; everybody well—well as health and riches and perfect happiness in the near prospect can make them. And not a confounded drop of that villanous stuff are you going to drink. I am going to have my way for about the space of a short while, and when I get through with you I want you to tell me simply and plainly exactly what kind of a phantasmagoria it is that you have got dancing about on the fox-fire-lighted screen of your brain. You have stayed in the woods until you have lapsed into a primitive state. In your ideal semi-barbarism you have allowed yourself to be elevated into the seventh heaven of human misery, and don't seem to be in the least con-

scious of your condition. You have even forgotten how to order a breakfast."

During this rhodomontade, Lubbock had rung the bell several times. A waiter was now knocking at the door; John opened it and delivered his order in "good set terms."

"For two—yes—and be quick," were his last words as he closed the door again.

"You need a guardian, Harringford," he resumed; "and you may as well begin now to look upon me in that light, and I am convinced that this present moment is the time for me to enter, actively, upon the duties of my office. I am going to have for you something that I know will straighten you up at once."

Harringford sat looking at his old friend with affectionate eyes. "John," he said slowly, "as soon as this marriage is over, I want you to go with me a little journey somewhere; I have thought over it often of late. I have a little money now, you know, thanks to your kindness and good management. I want to sit down by the sea awhile, and I want you with me."

The deep dejection of his tone and manner was unmistakable. Lubbock drew up his chair and sat close to his friend, speaking with great warmth and tenderness.

"And I will go with you. I have been leading my treadmill life until my soul—if I have any; neither you nor Ainsworth would ever allow

that I have—is shrivelling up for want of wholesome diet. I will go with you. I want to treat myself to a feast in your company, so just consider that settled, *now*. I don't care where you want to go, *I'll go*."

His words expressed no more than his manner, and both failed to do justice to all he felt.

The change in his friend stirred his nature deeply, and his sympathetic affections moved him like an inspiration.

Harringford's unaccountable melancholy appalled him; it seemed a monstrous metamorphosis that could not be endured. The power to inspire affection in others is a rich possession of the soul, but to feel an affection which can lend to us the power to do for others what we cannot accomplish for ourselves is a richer possession still, and the wonders which can be wrought by a vital, earnest sympathy is, perhaps, one of the greatest mysteries of life.

In an hour Lubbock had made a new man of Ruy Harringford. He never flagged in his friendly persistence until he had secured for him whatever of grace may be won by kindly ministering to the needs of the body, and just how much of heavenly grace is thus to be obtained is known to all who have lived to any purpose whatever, or given other than superficial thinking to our conditional and complex existence. Everyone knows the uplifting of the

spirit which comes by bathing the face in clear cool water, while such a trivial thing as a crumpled tie serves to bring disorder into the house of thought.

Lubbock played the part of an angel—wingless and rather heavy, but angel no less. He had Harringford's trunk brought in a hurry; swore at proper intervals, and in good orthodox fashion. He sat at table eating and drinking—out of his hour—as though to eat and drink from morning until night had been with him a pleasing and life-long occupation, notwithstanding the loud outcries of his conscience against the outrage upon his digestive economy. He talked incessantly, encouraging Harringford about his work, detailing pleasant things he had heard of it and making great plans for the future. He told joke after joke, and did most of the laughing himself, laughing loudest when he saw the red-eyed demon of dyspepsia dancing a nightmare hornpipe on the rim of his plate or glaring at him over the edge of his wineglass.

"And now, Ruy, my boy," he said at last, "seeing that your green and sickly fiend seems to have posted to the moon and left 'the world for us to bustle in,' let us begin by finding out just how we stand with it. First, then, I am your friend—through good or evil—I am your friend always. You won't need one should rise from the dead to tell you that. I think you are

nursing some hidden grief; are you not in some trouble? If you have some serious trouble, don't you think you ought to tell me of it?"

It is hard to say just what Lubbock had in his mind. He felt that he was treading on very sacred ground. He scanned mentally the wide range of probabilities, he even surmised wildly the possibilities. Harringford seemed looking into his soul's centre, so piercing was the unwavering gaze he bent upon him, but Lubbock met it with a frank, open look that was equally unflinching; secure in the perfect sincerity of his honest affection, he had nothing to fear. He leaned forward, and laying his hand on that of his friend, continued, speaking slowly, in low, clear tones: "Harringford, don't let your regard for me induce you to speak where you feel you should be silent, but if you need a friend's help, trust me. I will see you through your trouble, whatever it may be and wherever it may lead, even to the death."

"I know it, John, I know it," said Harringford, struggling with his emotions; "but there is really nothing so serious. I have an old trouble which I must learn to bear; there is no help for it here; I may speak of it after awhile. What I want to speak of now is another matter. Night before last I had a most horrible dream, and since then I have not been able to escape the remembrance of it for a mo-

ment. I have not been able either to eat or sleep, scarcely to think a rational thought. This is the cause of my coming without writing—I got in so late, too, last night. I'll soon be myself again now——"

"A dream?" said Lubbock, surprised: "What kind of a dream? About whom—Ainsworth?" he asked, quickly, recalling Harringford's anxiety to hear of him.

"Yes, it was about Ainsworth, and the most frightful that could be imagined. But why—what made you think it was of him?"

"Oh, nothing," said Lubbock; "I just wondered—go on—let me hear what it was."

"Well, you see, I had just had a letter from Harry, asking me to be best man for him, and telling me all about the marriage, and I suppose that was on my mind. I dreamed I had come, and, of course, started to go to Harry's room the first place. Everything seemed as tangible as life itself. It was broad day and I saw the old house as plain as I see you at this moment, and as I came near, Harry himself leaned from his window, saw me coming, and made a motion of recognition with his hand, which I returned, and quickened my steps until I reached the gate; here I had some difficulty; the latch seemed to have been changed to the other side. At last I got it to open, and went in, thinking how clean the pavement looked. In the middle

of it I saw growing up between the bricks a flower, one that I have never seen since I was in India, five years ago; I remembered—wondering at it; I stooped down and plucked it off, and as I did so, I heard some one crying. I went in and found old Aunt Huldy sitting on the floor of the hall, sobbing and wringing her hands. She did not seem to know me, but kept on muttering and moaning to herself. I asked her what had happened. She said she had seen a death's-head moth down in the cellar, and knew it was a warning that something dreadful was coming. Just then my eyes fell upon the flower in my hand and in it I saw a miniature, a perfect picture of Evelyn—Evelyn Weir."

Here Harringford stopped, and putting his hand up to his throat, turned quickly to the table and, taking up his glass, swallowed some wine. "Just then," he continued, "a sharp cry came from above. I ran quickly up the stairs and opened the door of Harry's room. He was sitting in his chair by a large table, facing me, his back to the open window. I started to walk toward him, as I thought, when I felt the room grow suddenly dark, and I saw that the walls had changed and seemed to be made of rough stones. I could distinctly see the glitter of dampness and perceived a sickening odor as of a close, unused cellar. The light faded out entirely and I stood groping in absolute darkness.

A chilly horror came over me. I spoke to Harry, but there was no answer; then, knowing the direction of his chair, I stepped forward, reaching out to feel for him. In a moment my hands rested on some object, but, merciful heaven! the shuddering dread which that contact inspired, the loathing, the despair, the awful fear, it cannot be described; I could neither move nor cry out; my whole body seemed changing to stone, but my mind was supernaturally alert. I knew what it was I was touching, yet I could not lift my hands: knew it in spite of the pitchy darkness as well as I knew it when a strange light filled the place and I saw Harry Ainsworth sitting before me a hideous shrivelled corpse, dried to the lightness of a mummy and shrunken to a skeleton.

"His hands were raised high, straight above his head, and as I struggled to loosen my hands from their involuntary hold, I could hear particles, which my efforts had shaken from their places, falling down within the dreadful hollow of the body.

"I tried again and again to call out, but my tongue felt as though swollen until it choked me. At last I seemed able, little by little, to move, and had succeeded by dint of pushing, sliding, and digging my fingers into the ground (for I had sunk down upon the floor of the place), to get back a few feet from the horrible thing; but

just when I thought I was going to escape, the ghastly figure leaned forward and I saw it was going to fall upon me, the dreadful arms would be about my neck. I suppose I had reached the utmost of what nature can endure, and with the superhuman effort I made to cry out I awoke. The shrill echoes of my own voice filled the room; I found myself sitting upright in the bed; my lamp was burning dimly. My first feeling was one of intense relief to find it all a dream. The next instant I was stricken through with new terror; a gaunt shadow was moving along the opposite wall; there could be no mistake, it was the shadow of a human being. It crossed the entire side of the room, turned the corner and advanced along the left-hand wall toward me. I watched it intently, fascinated by unspeakable dread. It came on until it reached the door that opened into the hall, through which it seemed to vanish.

"I could sleep no more. I sat as one stupefied, waiting for day. I have always thought my nerves strong as the strongest, but that dream has shaken me more than all the realities I have endured in my lifetime. I have not been able to rest at all, and started here next day. I got here late last night, and I tell you frankly, that dream haunted me so that I was afraid to go to the old house and try to call Harry up. I suppose this superstitious dread is an almost

inexcusable weakness, but it is like many others which afflict us, it is not to be done away with. You will well imagine, John, how relieved I am to hear that all is well with Ainsworth, for, strange as it seems to me now, my greatest fear has been that I would in some way find my dream true. I want you to go with me up to the old place; I cannot be satisfied until I have seen Harry for myself."

"That's just what I want to do," said Lubbock. "I stopped there this morning to speak to Ainsworth of your coming home; he was not expecting you. If you are ready, we will go now. I ordered a carriage to wait as I came in; I suppose it is at the door. I want you to get this dream phantom out of your mind; there's nothing in it. Dreams don't come true in our day, Ruy. It was a frightful thing, and I don't wonder at your being worried over it, but I think Ainsworth will be able to convince you that he is considerably alive and would seriously object to being mummified. Come, we'll soon have you laughing at your superstition."

In fact, Lubbock was anxious to be out in the open air; he was just a little dazed by the day's experiences. He recalled the scene with Ainsworth in the morning, and now here was Ruy Harringford, looking like an inspired ghost, telling a dream that, to say the least, was somewhat suggestive of the horrible. He didn't at

all like the movement of things. He felt himself growing more and more depressed, and he chafed under it.

"Fill your glass there, Ruy," he said; "here's to the eternal rest of your nightmare ghost; drink, and for God's sake, man, do try to look a little more cheerful."

Half an hour later they were driving at a slow pace along the shady side-street on which the old Harringford house was situated, within a block or two of their destination. The dark cloud seemed slowly lifting from Harringford's mind, and under the influence of Lubbock's companionship he had almost grown cheerful.

Their talk had been about literature. "Oh, well," Harringford was saying, "it is the circumscribed range of our vision which makes us elated or depressed by the outcome of the moment. If we could only school our souls to look beyond, we would see that all criticism must be impotent finally. The world's big mind is at last made up, and in the end the great seal is set, approving or condemning, regardless of individual opinion. The final result is determined in either case the moment the work is done, only we cannot know it, and if we could only remember that when the time does come for the pronouncing of the irrevocable fiat, we shall most likely long since have found the peaceful happiness of unconscious dust, no more to be

disturbed by good or ill; we would not feel as we so often do, but we cannot live in this eternal projection, and there is not much for us but to fall back upon the comforting egotism of faith. Our work must be its own reward; our love for it, our pleasure in the doing must content us. All anxiety about what is beyond this is really but vanity and vexation of spirit. But love, that is true love, repays us now, whether it be for art or for some—" The monologue broke off suddenly. "Look, John," he said.

Lubbock glanced at him, and following the direction of his eyes, saw, coming down the steps in front of the house just opposite, Evelyn Weir. She looked like a goddess leaving her temple.

In a moment Lubbock had stopped the carriage, and both he and Harringford joined her on the sidewalk. There was the usual interchange of greetings and compliments. Harringford bore the unexpected meeting with a fair show of outward calm, though his trembling hand and exceeding pallor betrayed the intensity of his suppressed emotions.

"We were just upon our way to the old place," he said, "and if you will allow us we will walk the rest of the way and pray for your good company."

"Then you must pray for yourselves; you

have forestalled me. I was about to ask you to walk a little farther and spend the evening with us; we dine at five. I have many congratulations and some scoldings for you, Mr. Harringford; but I can forgive you much for this pleasant surprise. But you are always surprising us."

"Oh, thank you, thank you, Miss Evelyn; you are very kind to say so; we are about making an unceremonious call on an acquaintance of yours who lives not far from this."

"Oh, yes," said Evelyn, with a confused smile, blushing visibly. "Well, at least I shall expect you later?"

"I shall be delighted," said Harringford.

"And," John put in, "of course you include Harry in this invitation?"

"Oh, to be sure—I want all of you! Mr. Harringford, I will not wait until then to congratulate you on your latest success. We are all very greatly pleased with your last book. I am charmed with the touch of romance, yet I can but wonder where so cheerful a man can get all that sadness from; one would imagine the writer quite a melancholy person, I think, not in the least like yourself. I never thought you gave much heed to the affections."

It was Harringford's turn to blush, which he did.

"I think some change has come to you; can

it be possible that some fickle lass has broken your merry heart for you ? "

Harringford grew white again. He turned to her, looking steadfastly into the smiling eyes.

" No fickle lass, I fear," he said, and stopped.

Both stood silent, looking at each other. It was only for a moment, and each turned away without a word ; whatever of the truth was recognized was buried in silence by mutual consent.

" You see," said Lubbock, " he has been for some time a devoted worshipper at the feet of the dismal goddess solitude ; it has had its effect —it always does."

" Yes, that is true," said Evelyn, not looking up. They were nearing the old Harringford place. The carriage had followed along, and Lubbock now motioned the driver to turn in.

" How sweet they are !—the locust-blossoms," said Harringford, as he caught the scent now from the old trees. His heart gave a great bound. A moment more and he would see Harry—Harry Ainsworth—his life-long friend, whom he loved better than he loved himself.

The day was perfect. The sky was deep blue and intensely brilliant. The swaying maples, yielding to every movement of the air, were constantly greeting each other with soft whisper-

ings, all their silken garments glistening in the sun. Life, hope, happiness, seemed to pervade all things. Birds sang everywhere; flowers bloomed, and the butterflies, fluttering about in the sun, looked like strange blossoms blown upon the wind.

In this quiet part of the city, where the houses retreated from the street, almost hiding themselves from sight amid the trees and vines and tangled shrubberies of the ample grounds, Nature seemed to have wandered down from the far hills, making a peaceful but complete conquest of the town. People were wont to stand of mornings at their front fences gossiping across the street. Few vehicles heavier than the low-wheeled phaetons, filled usually to overflowing with sunny-haired children, ever disturbed the thick-shaded avenues. At times the sprinkler, looking like some huge green, iron-bound beetle, would pass by on its rounds, leaving a gracious coolness in its wake. The fragrant air seemed ever wandering about in search of something to bless.

Ainsworth sat by the open window of his study, which looked out upon the side grounds. The snowy bloom of the locusts gleamed in the sunlight against the sky, and the delicious odor stole into the room like some fabled balm of elysium. He listened to the playing of the fountain in the next enclosure, and could see

the thin jet of water as it lifted above the rose-vines clambering all over the high board-fence which divided the grounds.

He glanced up at the sky, at the tall shimmering poplars, and the maples, changing continually from green to silver and from silver to green as they swayed back and forth; at the tall chimneys and the shining roofs, where an occasional pigeon strutted proudly, mimicked by his black shadow upon the shingles; at the ever-busy sparrows as they fluttered and hopped about in their unceasing and happy activity.

"It is a pleasant world," he thought, his heart filled with a grateful sense of the sweetness and beauty of life on such a day. "With one you love to love you, with health and youth, and no cloud to cast a shadow on the future."

"It is a good world," he went on, murmuring his thoughts aloud, "a lovely world, and I thank God for it." A mist had gathered in his eyes.

At that moment there came the sound of voices and footsteps advancing along the street. Presently three people came by the thick group of bushes which hid the fence at the corner of the lawn. They were Evelyn Weir, Ruy Harringford, and John Lubbock.

"There he is now," said Lubbock, motioning toward the house. Harringford looked up quickly, Evelyn gave a shy glance and looked down, blushing. Ainsworth leaned out, smiling,

made a playful motion with his hand, and hastily withdrew from the window.

"What do you both say?" said Harringford. "I'll bring Harry, and we'll all go for a drive out the Allendale road."

Both gave ready assent. Harringford laid a strong hand on the iron gate, and in an instant was in the hallway, his anxious foot upon the stair.

"Ye ain't gwine ter pass me, is you, Marse Ruy? Lawd, Lawd, look at dat man; whar yo' git dat mustaches, chile? Howdy—howdy—howdy—hoo-wee!! Looks lak yo' 'bout done quit cyarn fo' de ole place en de folks hyar. Is yo' mos' done gambasin' ovah de face uv de yuth yit, hey, honey?"

"Yes, I have about finished with the earth, I believe, now, Mammy; a little while longer, and I'll be back to stay. And how have you been?"

"Po'ly, po'ly, Marse Ruy, mighty po'ly; look lak dey ain't no yarbs kin keep de misery outen dese ole bones, no ways; no mo' kin dey make um spry agin, Marse Ruy. I'se gwine down de dark valley of triblations fas' es I kin go. Looks lak, yas, yas, but, my Lawd, hit lifs me up to see yo' face back hyar, dat hit do, Marse Ruy."

"Well, now, I am sorry to find you poorly, Mammy, but I am going to be at home soon, to stay, I hope, and I'll get you something that will cure you, too. I may have to leave you

for awhile—just now. We think of going out for a drive, you see," he said, striding up the stairway and making the whole fabric shake under him. A moment more and he was in the upper hall, at Ainsworth's door. His loud resounding knock echoed through the empty rooms of the old house. He stood waiting for a little, for the door to open, but there was no response. He knocked again impatiently, and then without waiting, put his hand on the knob and entered. "Aha! My long lost—" he began, expectantly, but stopped short. No one was there. The room was still as death. He stood listening, thinking Ainsworth had hidden from him. After waiting a few moments in silence, feeling greatly disappointed and a little resentful, he knocked on the door of the room adjoining, but there was no answer.

He felt a hot flush of rising anger, and after an instant's hesitation, pushed the door open and looked in. No one was there.

This unaccountable action on the part of his friend after so long separation and after Ainsworth had seen his approach, rather stunned Harringford, and in the midst of his perplexity and rapidly growing vexation he hardly knew what to think, much less what to do.

He came back mechanically into the study again and stood looking about him, endeavoring to collect his bewildered senses.

"Harry," he called, sharply, "don't be trying any pranks on me now for Heaven's sake; we are waiting for you, too—and—" His voice faltered and once more he stood listening. A new thought suddenly startled him. He whirled and stepped quickly to the window and looked below. No—the green grass flecked with the snow of the locust-blooms, was waving happily in the sun; no one had fallen there. He turned into the room and shouted, "Ainsworth, if you are here, answer me; this treatment is outrageous. I am going." He took a step toward the door, but stopped to glance over the table; a chair was placed beside it; Ainsworth had evidently been writing only a few moments before. Books and papers were strewn about; a large book was lying open with a heavy weight still pressing down the open page; a writing tablet was placed beside it; he had seemingly been copying some extracts from a scientific work.

Harringford looked over these things musingly, half unconscious of time and place, his thoughts borne away on a flood of recollections. A dried leaf from a dusty autumn bouquet on the top of the high book-case fell whirling down through the stillness and settled at his feet; a fly buzzed loudly on the window-pane behind the slowly swaying curtain.

The sound of voices in the front of the house recalled him to himself. Ah—that was it—Ains-

worth had slipped out and gone around some other way just to tease him. With a parting glance about the room, he went out, closing the door after him, and started down the stair; Lubbock was just coming in.

"So you are coming, are you, at last? Do you know how long we've been waiting? We had about concluded the meeting had been too much for you both—but where is Harry?" he said, stopping at the lower step.

"Oh, you are in it too, are you?" Harringford said, half angrily. "Has everybody turned fool? I can't say, John, that I enjoy this; it's not amusing to me, whatever fun you may find in such play."

Lubbock who had started to go out of the door, whirled around in amazement. "Why, Ruy," he said, "what is the matter? Have you lost your senses? Play—what do you mean?"

"Look here," said Harringford, seriously, "if you and Ainsworth have any foolishness on hand, stop it; you ought to know that I am in no humor for it. I am at a loss entirely, I fail utterly to appreciate or comprehend this reception. Harry seems to be avoiding this meeting with me. I can think of no reason he could could possibly have; if you know of anything, tell me of it, at once. I have waited as patiently as I can, and unless Harry makes his appearance very quickly, I shall leave the house with-

out seeing him. I do not care to be trifled with further."

Harringford's face was white, his nostrils dilating, and his eyes ablaze with excitement, while the keen precision of his enunciation denoted his bitter resentment.

"Oh, well, why, Ruy, of course—of course it's all an accident. You know Harry would be the last one to hurt you willingly. Don't be hasty —wait up there a moment—I'll soon find what is the matter; he thought we were going by, likely enough."

Lubbock went back through the house and Harringford turned reluctantly up the stairs again, his anger slowly giving way before the overwhelming preponderance of the fears which once more began to present themselves, with the remembrance of his dream, and the perplexities which seemed to benumb his mind. He went back along the upper hallway, looking into the empty rooms in a dazed mechanical sort of way, not in the least conscious of why he was doing it. He heard Lubbock's voice several times loudly calling for Ainsworth, and found himself counting the echoes as they bounded from one hollow apartment to another. Again and again he heard the call, fainter now, for it came from outside the house. He forgot everything in the intentness with which he listened for an answer. How long he had been

waiting in miserable suspense he did not know, when, at last, he heard a door open below him and hasty footsteps mounting the stair which led up from the rear part of the house.

He took a step forward and began speaking eagerly:

"Great God, Ainsworth, what could induce you to—" He stopped short. It was Lubbock, breathing painfully, a strained expression of anxious inquiry upon his face.

"Well," said Harringford, as Lubbock reached the top.

"Well, I suppose he is not here, Ruy; I can't find him anywhere; Aunt Huldy says she has not seen him since I was here this morning. He must have slipped away from us for some reason. I don't know what to think about it exactly—some whim, I suppose; stop now, Ruy," he said, suddenly laying his hand upon Harringford's arm, "don't fret about it; there couldn't be anything serious—Harry was at the window just now, you know," he went on appealingly.

Harringford's face grew colorless. "Come," he said, commandingly, leading the way back into Ainsworth's study. There they stood a moment or two, looking blankly at each other, then went together into the bedchamber and looked about them without speaking. A vase of flowers stood on the dressing-bureau; the

doors of the wardrobe stood opened, and a dressing-gown was lying upon the floor.

"Did he not have that on when we saw him at the window?" asked Harringford, pointing to the gown, which seemed to have been thrown hastily aside.

"I don't know at all," Lubbock answered wonderingly. "I think he did; I don't know at all."

"Well, John, let us go," said Harringford, a hard-set look coming into his face. "Miss Weir has been waiting all this time for us. This welcome is satisfying, at least, whatever else may be said of it."

Sarcastic enough these words seemed merely in themselves, but the tone in which they were uttered was one of deep distress and painful disappointment. "But wait a moment—some explanation will be needed — what shall we say?"

"Leave that to me," said Lubbock, "we can only say that we cannot explain."

To the explanations that were made, Evelyn Weir listened with impatient blushing embarrassment at first, then with blank and simple amazement, finally with growing pallor and flashing, half-veiled eyes that glowed and sparkled with her changing emotions.

There was an effort on all sides to ignore the unpleasant incident, but the effort was too pal-

pably apparent to be successful. A sudden eclipse seemed to shadow the pathway of pleasure, and by a kind of tacit mutual consent the proposed drive was given over, the carriage was dismissed and the little party strolled on toward Evelyn's home, conversing, with forced lightness, of everything except the one theme with which every mind was busy. The soul seemed to have died out of their talk entirely by the time they reached the gate, and Harringford noticed a quaver in Evelyn's voice as she reiterated her invitation to come and dine with her.

There was a moment's hesitation, during which Harringford struggled with himself. A miserable embarrassment was taking possession of him.

He could see plainly enough that Evelyn was very much disturbed. There was a look of genuine distress in her eyes. "If I only knew her thoughts," he said to himself. "She might wish to be alone." And yet how could he decline?

"We will come," he said, quickly, and with a heartiness of manner that was not in the least assumed; "and," he continued, "till then, good-by."

He held her hand in his own for an instant, and despite the May sunshine and the warm, sweet air, it was cold as clay. She turned and went swiftly into the house, and the two men walked away in silence.

It was the evening of the next day, and they were sitting together in Lubbock's room.

"I tell you, John, I can't make it out at all; I made sure Harry would be there."

"Well, but you forget, Ruy, he had no invitation; how should he know?" Lubbock answered, evasively.

"Oh, pshaw, John, if he had wished to find me, he could easily have inquired; he could have guessed where we were. Do you think he needed to wait for an invitation?"

"No, I suppose not; but how can you tell what may have prevented him. A thousand things might have happened—I mean—nothing could have happened—don't worry about it, Ruy; you know Harry has no reason for not wishing to meet you; it's absurd." The fact was, Lubbock was feeling much more uneasiness than he cared to discover.

"Absurd, yes," said Harringford, "what you say *is* perfectly absurd. There is but one way to look at this, John, and that is honestly and fairly. Just wait now"—with an imperious wave of his hand motioning Lubbock to silence—"I put it to you honestly whether or not I have cause to be distressed. You know all about Harry's letters to me. You know we have been like brothers—more even—to each other. You know also why I came before I was expected—wait now, let me finish. You know that Harry

saw me from the window and you know what has happened since. Now, I ask you, does it not force itself upon your reason that Harry is either avoiding me, wilfully and intentionally, or that something has happened to him which prevents his coming to me? Is that not plain to you? Well," he went on, Lubbock having remained silent, "what, then, am I to think? It is even easier for me to think that some sudden harm has come to Harry—unlikely as that seems—than to think that he would willingly turn away from me, giving no sign, showing no cause, knowing that I am here, near him, and yet remain away, contemptuous alike of me and my distress. I tell you I have cause, and good cause, to be worried, and I am," and rising, he began to walk back and forth, nervously clasping and unclasping his hands behind him.

"Well, Ruy," said Lubbock, "all I ask is that you will be patient for a little while—as patient as you can be"—rather doubtfully, having stolen a quick glance at Harringford's face. "You are all too quick with your conclusions; it's just some whim of Harry's which you will laugh at when you see him; you are all broken up with your trip, anyway; what you want now is a good night's rest. You will see it all differently tomorrow. Don't be foolish—come and sit down." But Harringford was not listening evidently, for he went on pacing up and down in silence.

Lubbock bethought him—"What do you say to walking down by the house? We might see if Harry is there yet." Harringford's only answer was to reach for his hat and start to the door. Lubbock followed with what grace he might.

The streets were lonely and quiet, for it was past eleven of the clock. The misty moon seemed hanging unusually near to the earth, and dispensed her soft radiance with gentle and even touches, like a silent and continuous benediction. A cool and delicious air was stirring among the branches of the dreaming maples.

"Kind Heaven, what a night it is!" said Harringford, with unconscious reverence.

They walked on in silence, and, reaching the old house, went beyond the gate, till they came to a point from which they could see the window of Ainsworth's room; it was still open, but no light was to be seen.

"Wait a minute," said Lubbock, and he went in through the gate and stood under the window. "Ainsworth—oh, Harry"—he called; but there was no answer. He went to the corner of the house where the eaves dripped and gathered a handful of pebbles. Coming back, he stood away from the house and threw them against the window of Ainsworth's sleeping-room; they rattled loudly upon the glass, and before the

sounds had ceased, Lubbock called again, but there was no sign from within, and the two men walked away, both busy with their own thoughts.

It would be folly to attempt a description of Harringford's state of mind as he lay, vainly longing for sleep. There is no sea so troubled, so remorseless, and so deep, as the sea of thought. That sea has no kindness of death to bring rest to the storm-tossed soul; there the mind, lashed in the boat of life, which will not sink, is whirled by the giddy waves over the edges of appalling and fantastic gulfs, only to be lifted again and borne along through renewed buffetings; the roar of anger, the loud clarion of fear, the smooth, glassy sweep which rounds the maelstrom of despair—all in their turn and none fatal, save to that dream of wished-for peace, which seems blotted out of the realm of being forever.

So the next day and night came and went, and the next. Four days since the day of Harringford's return and still no word of Ainsworth, and not one sign discovered that could give the slightest hint as to the cause of his disappearance. Harringford and Lubbock were moving about Ainsworth's study in a state of bewilderment which admits of no comparison.

Aunt Huldy's voice could be heard now and

then, as she wandered about the house, mumbling and muttering to herself and exclaiming aloud from time to time when some new realization of her grief came upon her.

Neighbors had been called in and questioned. Ainsworth's friends everywhere in the city had been consulted. The house, from garret to cellar, and the entire premises had been thoroughly searched; but all had been fruitless. Detectives had been employed and telegrams sent to all places where Ainsworth was known to have acquaintances; all had been done that could be done, and now the two men were left to themselves once more, to linger idly about the deserted, silent rooms, to wonder and still to wonder, in abject helplessness.

"Did you see Miss Weir this morning, John, when you called?" Harringford asked, abruptly.

"No," answered John, reluctantly. "No, I didn't see her; she is ill. I told them to keep the papers from her."

Harringford dropped the book he had just picked up from the table, but recovered it quickly and, sitting down, began spinning the leaves with trembling fingers, while he gazed absently at nothing.

Lubbock, turning away to the window, watched the falling locust-blooms, and listened to the confused murmur of the out-of-door sounds,

which all seemed muffled as in a dream. Thus they remained for some moments in utter silence, but suddenly both men turned to look at each other, Harringford rising quickly to his feet.

They heard Evelyn Weir's voice in the hall below. She was talking excitedly to Aunt Huldy. A moment after she came swiftly up the stairs and entered the study. In one hand she held a newspaper, which had been twisted into a roll in her unconscious desperation, and the white fingers still clinched it fiercely; her cheeks were ashen pale, her lips trembling, and her eyelids red with weeping; her left hand was raised to her throat, and she seemed vainly struggling for speech. She advanced as far as the table. Ainsworth's chair still stood in its place, the large book, with the weight on its pages, still lay open upon the table, the tablet, too, and the pen—one that she had given him—lay beside it. On these things she looked intently for an instant, and then raising her eyes, she fixed them upon the two men who stood speechless. Each of them started visibly.

For another moment she stood looking into the two white faces before her; there was no mistaking what she saw written there. Suddenly they seemed faded into a gray mist—the window grew dark and the May sunshine turned to blackness. She sank down upon the

chair, leaning heavily upon the table, her lifeless hand pushing the weight from the open book. It fell to the floor with a jarring sound, which rang through the lonely house like a knell.

PART TWO

A MEETING AND FAREWELL

If one could ease an aching heart,
By breathing of the mountain air;
Or woo the wary soul to part
A little from the path of care!

I hear the brittle twig beneath her feet,
And now, I mark
Her even step, which stirs the rustling leaf!

O bid her stay!—
Sweet silence of the breathing wood speak thou
For me I pray:—
Woo her to linger even as she lingers now!

Can she not hear
The beating of my heart—is there no sound
Comes to her ear—
No voice, that cries from passion's battle-ground?

More than three years had passed away since the strange disappearance of Harry Ainsworth. Every effort to find a clew had failed. Of course there had been a great sensation, and, of course, the press teemed with numberless theories and explanations which answered every purpose, except, indeed, the one for which they were pre-

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sumably written. In most instances such trivial things as simple impossibilities were not allowed to hinder the genius of invention.

The enthusiastic absurdities which were put forth, in all seriousness—a tithe of which, only found places in print—had they been gathered together and analyzed, would have proven, conclusively, that the average human mind is a very much overrated thing.

A strange happening, an unexplainable incident, is a spark which excitement may fan to a flame, and then—if one has spiritual eyes to see clearly in that unusual and unnatural light—one may read some not very comforting truths. Many of the attempted explanations of Harry Ainsworth's fate, if they could be reproduced here, might possibly be entertaining.

One man insisted, for example, that, being a scientist, he had a balloon anchored on the roof, and for sport, had, on hearing the approach of his friends, run to the attic, climbed through the trap-door and into the balloon, which, of course, collapsed over some wood or river, and so he was unaccountably lost. And, of course, no human eye would be in the least likely to notice a balloon rising over the city in broad daylight, nor would anyone have detected so small an object careening about for hours—perhaps for days, on the top of the house; and yet so persistent was this heretofore perfectly docile business

man, that at last he had to be forcibly ejected—together with a second and less happy theory—from every editorial sanctum in the city—and that in the very city, too, where he had lived a sober and industrious life and accumulated a fortune as a result of his strict adherence to sound commercial principles and continued exercise of good common-sense.

But as the days and weeks grew to months and passed away, bringing no solution of the mystery, the interest flagged, and in a very short time Harry Ainsworth was—so far as the great world was concerned—forgotten; or was recalled only now and then as an example of the strange things which can and do happen.

But there were a few who had never ceased to watch and wait and wonder. Among these was the woman Ainsworth had loved.

It might be more in accordance with what is commonly regarded among the demands of romance to record that she sunk under the dreadful shock and became a hopeless and melancholy wreck in mind and body, or that she grieved herself—as many a heart has done, alas!—into a good green grave; but surely it should be no cause for regret to know that the poor girl recovered, at last, her threatened health and, seemingly, at least, her wonted spirits.

Evelyn Weir lived to bear her heavy sorrow as only a woman can—patiently, uncomplain-

ingly, almost cheerfully—lived as thousands of other women have lived and will live, lived to bless and comfort other lives with whatever of love and hope a strong nature may save from the wreck of a perfect happiness—like a fair tree which puts forth on the remaining branches whatever it may of leaf and bloom, seeking still, with what is left, to make its life beautiful, to spread a grateful shelter and hide as best it can the scars of the cruel lightning's stroke which has destroyed the faultless symmetry and comeliness of its first perfect growth.

She was one who had never forgotten. Of the three others who could not forget, one was dead. Poor old Aunt Huldy, with her simple affectionate heart, full of superstitious fears and haunted by unreasonable remorse, had no power to accept, nor find comfort in, arguments based on philosophical grounds, which might have sufficiently sustained a more intelligent being. The dreadful spectacle, always present to her mind, of what she considered a fearful and sudden fulfilment of her own prophesying, preyed upon her continually, and while it did not cause her death, perhaps, it did surely hasten it.

"'Tain't no use, Marse Ruy," she would say when Harringford would try to cheer her. "'Taint no use nohow. I'se gwine down de dark valley ob de shadow, dat's whar I'se gwine, plumb thu; hit's de woryin' en de misery in

hyar, 'bout 'busin' dat po' chile an' a callin' down de Lawd's wraf, dat's what hit air, Marse Ruy, dat's what. Looks lak dat I cawn't get no res' hyar, en hit'll foller clar to de chume; no, no honey! dey ain't no yarbs fo' dat!"

And so the poor clouded soul went out into that world where God's mercy must have astonished her when she came to find no record kept of her slight offending.

The remaining two who never ceased to recall sadly the shrouded fate of Ainsworth, were Lubbock and Harringford. Of these two men, one was doomed to pass through an experience so fraught with spiritual griefs, so strange in all its unprecedented phases and so painful, that if this history had not been so far followed, in obedience to unknown influences which have impelled its writing, the scenes which now present themselves as a part of it which must follow, should be left unrecorded here.

As for John Lubbock, being of a sanguine temperament and somewhat deficient, perhaps, in accurate penetration, he could pretty successfully resist the encroachments of harassing thought, and soon formed for himself a theory which in a vague and general way accounted—to his mind at least—for Ainsworth's disappearance; so that in time he began to look upon the matter as settled. Nor was he anxious to subject his conclusions to any severe tests of

analysis, which would, in all probability, have compelled him to seek some other ground on which to shift the vexing question.

Therefore he was disposed to let well enough alone, being of that nature which is fain to throw off whatever is irksome to it without inquiring too closely into the means by which the burden is removed; so that while Lubbock remembered with true sorrow Ainsworth's fate, it was with a kind of peaceful regret, which prevented the unrestful demon of vain speculation from preying upon his mind.

Not so was it with Harringford. Because of the attitude in which he found himself, and because of the relations he sustained toward Ainsworth—known to his own soul alone—his was a peculiar grief. The wound was more vital, and time could not bring forgetfulness to him. Not that he was higher or finer in his nature; perhaps no nature could well be higher or finer than was that of his devoted friend, John Lubbock, but Harringford was possessed of a delicately constituted organism, which brings the indwelling spirit into continual and a painful contact with the outlying world.

He could not shut up his soul, as within thick walls, and so defy the assailing phantoms of wounding thought.

Although his life had been a brave and heroic struggle with poverty and misfortune, he had

borne the battle well, and had always been regarded as a man who held troubles in but light esteem, for he was by nature of a buoyant and hopeful disposition; but within a few years many causes conspiring together produced in Harringford a complete psychical revolution. One occurrence after another, each with its attendant influences, had at last hedged in his life as within an unseen barrier. The slowly narrowing circle seemed to be enclosing him within its impassable limits and baffling every effort of his unconquered will to escape from the fated ground. Some of these causes have no doubt already been guessed, many yet remain to be shown. Perhaps the very spirit of self-reliance which made him shut up his anguish in his own heart—striving to hide his sorrow from every eye—had worked him woe. There might have come relief in some outburst, but his was a dumb grief, wrapped in the silence of an unyielding pride. But there is no spirit so strong, no nature so self-reliant, that it may not be crushed at last.

After years of endurance he had received Ainsworth's letter, asking him to attend at the marriage, and he had determined to come, vaguely hoping that the very fierceness of the trial might serve as a death-blow to hope, ending all.

Then came the frightful dream which had so

possessed him with unreasonable fears that all other considerations were driven, perforce, out of his mind. What followed is already known. The sudden transformation of everything for him, caused by Ainsworth's unaccountable disappearance, seemed like some enchantment wrought by the mocking powers, which seem at times to usurp the throne of the universe, dispensing their blessings with a curse, and with demoniac laughter bestowing their cruel mercy upon the helpless beings of the earth.

Harringford's heart filled with hope that was torture, and his soul was racked with a grief that made him shudder when his lightning-like thought detected in it a touch of joy which was now like guilt.

The way was cleared.

If the woman he loved was to be won, he was free to win her. But how was the way cleared? Was it true—was Ainsworth dead—and how—and why?—the friend of his life, the brave companion of his earlier struggles, who had never failed him.

Had he failed in aught? No. There was that comfort; to that rock he held in the whirlpool which swept around him. He had, at least, been faithful; he had seen, as he believed, the truth; he had done what he could, going away to hide from them both the wretchedness which they might have guessed, but now

—now, a tragedy had suddenly opened the pathway to a possible happiness. But was it, indeed, a possible happiness? It seemed like some fair and luring flower, clothed in tempting and unwonted beauty, to win the eye, but with thorns like serpents' teeth, to wound to death the hand that plucked it. It was as though he were suddenly called upon by the fates to set up, in his belated chariot, the dead hopes which he himself had slain, and drive to a humiliating triumph over the dead body of his friend, his late companion in the battle, who was fallen by the way.

There was no limit to Harringford's powers for self-torture. Whichever way he turned his thought, he encountered the face of a new anguish; yet not real faces they were, but masks, and from behind each one the smiling face of a forbidden joy mocked him; albeit, he firmly grasped his bitter cup and drank in silence—despairing, but alone.

In serious truth, the swift-footed ills of life had brought Harringford to bay—he was hedged in on every side.

There is not much to recount of the happenings in the years which followed, immediately, Ainsworth's disappearance, though they had been eventful enough, perhaps, for Harringford. There had been, first, the trip with Lubbock, but the ocean only seemed to reflect back his own

spirit's sense of loneliness and desolation. A tragic remembrance haunted him always—such is always in the power of the mind to tinge all the world with its own color.

Harringford tried to be philosophical, and very soon found out what a poor boastful fool philosophy is. It can no more satisfy the unhappy heart than clay can satisfy the body's hunger. It is easy to say, "What matters it? A little while and I shall be dust, then I shall not care. Why should I care now?"

We can easily feel that the time will come, but while life stays in the heart she insists on being satisfied, now; nothing but the remorseless hand of death can stop her unceasing cry for happiness.

With such like thoughts vexing his soul, Harringford at last arose and threw his philosophy to the winds. His melancholy turned to madness. He sought no more for rational comfort, but tried to drown thought and feeling amid the insipid waters of a certain social sea; and for a little his own madness mocked itself into smiling. The patent young men and women served to amuse him for a time. Curious creatures they were, and entertaining after a fashion, like some new kind of figures counting just the same however they might be placed; turned out of some small and easily handled mould, seemingly, in Nature's idler moments, and imposed

upon the world, by her, as actual human beings, in a sort of playful false pretence.

He soon tired of it all, however, and for a long time Lubbock saw nothing of him, and the unsatisfactory letters which he received from time to time—sent from widely distant points—showed what a restless, wandering life he was leading.

At last one golden October found them together at a beautiful mountain-resort.

It seemed just a little strange, but very pleasingly so, to Harringford, that Evelyn Weir should be there, but he accepted it as he had learned to accept everything.

She was accompanied by her rather stately Aunt Delia, whom he always afterward remembered as being everywhere present and imparting a certain flavor of untold experience not out of keeping with the spirit of the mountains themselves. She seemed like one who had been a chaperone from all eternity, moving in a changeless orbit like the unwearied stars; persistent and ubiquitous as old Time himself.

It was evident that Evelyn Weir regarded Harringford with peculiar interest, as was but natural. Perhaps, by some subtle intuition, she divined in part the truth; perhaps it was only a consciousness of the tie which existed between them because of their great mutual sorrow, albeit her heart singled him out for pe-

culiar reverence; and as for Harringford himself, she was for him distinct and separate from all other women in the world, as the moon is separate from the stars; and as for her beauty, he could conceive of nothing beyond her; she seemed to him the head and front of perfection; he looked upon her as he might have looked upon one of the immortals. The nobleness of her spiritual composition seemed to find fitting expression in every feature and movement of her person; his hopeless eyes followed her in simple adoration.

They saw much of each other, and there were times when Harringford was tempted to hope—to speak, even—but as often as the thought came to him, it was quickly banished by an inevitable and mournful remembrance. He was, however, soon lifted out of the spiritual apathy into which he had lapsed, and even seemed at times to have regained something of his wonted buoyancy of mind. The interchange of thought with one so beautiful and gifted by nature and so chastened by sorrow—even though it might lead to nothing better than this reserved companionship—was gracious and ennobling in every way to him; so that, despite the hidden anguish in his heart, he grew to have clearer, calmer, and more courageous views of life. His old love of nature came back with tenfold strength and tenderness, and his busy imagina-

tion was ever weaving delightful and fantastic environment for the figure of one adored image; fanciful creations they were, ever-changing visions, of which the woman he loved was at once the sole centre and inspiration.

Perhaps it was but another madness, but a madness indeed which all men might covet, for it lifted him above the common world, above himself, into a realm in which the soul expands beyond the clay walls of its prison-house and asserts its divine privileges and powers.

With regard to Ainsworth himself, it seemed impossible for Harringford to reach any satisfactory or definite conclusion. If each day did not bring a new presentation of that ever-present theme, there was at least a hopeless scrutinizing of his former guesses—hopeless, because it all brought no comfort. If aught seemed now on a review to be absurd, he could not prove it so; all must still be in doubt and darkness. Sometimes he doubted if he had really seen Ainsworth at the open window, yet, there was the corroboration from the others; could it have been only an apparition, seen by all? This he could not accept. Yet it seemed as easy to believe as the fact that he had vanished from sight and from life, apparently, within the next minute, almost.

There was one thought which sometimes startled his soul: could it be possible that Ainsworth had in some way found out the truth, and

in a moment of insane self-abnegation determined to clear the way for what he supposed would be his friend's happiness?

Preposterous as this seemed, Harringford's mind dwelt much upon it, nevertheless. But if he could have accepted this theory, which he could not, there would still remain the question, what had Ainsworth really done; was he alive or dead? Perhaps he was a wanderer in some far country; perhaps near at hand, so disguised as not to betray himself, watching to see if what he had intended would really come to pass. Harringford carefully recollected what he knew of Ainsworth's peculiar notions regarding life, his habits of thought, his acute penetration, his patience, his passion for purely scientific knowledge, and his intense love of experiment as a test for all things. At times he thought Ainsworth's voluntary self-sacrifice, with the benefit of his friend as a first motive, and the ambitious pursuance of a new idea into untried and dangerous fields as a second, seemed not at all incompatible with what he knew of his friend's disposition.

Sometimes this would assume all the attributes of extreme probability, almost certainty, and he would start up in a fever of impatience, wildly determined to seek and find his friend and convince him of his insane folly at all hazards, and perhaps—within the next hour—the recollection of that dreadful dream or the intru-

sion of some new and startling thought respecting the unsolved mystery, would completely unsettle him again and utterly dissipate all his plans.

Would the truth ever be known? Harringford's mind dwelt upon the question with feelings that can only be guessed. Although he held mainly to his first conviction, that Ainsworth was dead, unreasonable as it seemed—for this appeared to him more reasonable than that he should be alive—there were times when he seemed compelled to take the latter view. Perhaps the mind has its own means of thus relaxing the strain put upon it, changing the burden slightly, as a man might shift a load from one shoulder to the other, finding thus some small relief from weariness, although the burden must still be borne.

Harringford found himself, from time to time, curiously scrutinizing the people he met, filled with vague suspicions which he was half consciously loath to entertain, but which he could not, for his life, banish from his mind.

Naturally enough, in his talks with Evelyn the subject in which both were so painfully interested was rarely mentioned; but of late Harringford had become possessed of a great desire to know if she had ever doubted like himself: had ever entertained a thought as to the possibility that Ainsworth was still alive. Yet the days went

by in indolent and half-happy dreaming. The time he had set for his return to the old place was drawing near, and still he had not been able to speak; there was something in the dark depths of Evelyn's clear gray eyes that seemed to make it impossible for him. At last, to his utter astonishment, she herself opened the way. It was the last evening of his stay on the mountain; they had been talking, seriously, of many things, Evelyn resting upon one of the rude grape-vine seats which were placed here and there about the half-wilderness "grounds," and Harringford walking up and down before her. How beautiful she looked in her yielding white attire, half enveloped as she was in soft sanguine folds of knitted wool. From time to time she stretched out one faultless hand, stripping off fragments of the fibrous bark from the piece of vine-wood which formed an arm to the seat; and then she would fall to shredding it in girlish fashion, placing the threads together, like a silken skein, across her knees. Harringford watched her, as he paced to and fro, struggling with the emotions which threatened instantly to overcome him; striving, evermore vainly, with his thoughts, which made his heart beat so wildly and so loudly that he actually feared she would hear it.

What would he not give for one moment's freedom—to break away from this insufferable

bondage—surely there must be some way out—why should he not make one supreme effort and tear asunder the galling strands with which the sure hand of destiny had tied up his life?

Why should this hateful Death forever thrust his phantom form betwixt him and his hopes?

"Death is mighty, mightier than is Life," a voice seemed to whisper, but his aroused soul cried out aloud within him, drowning all else:

"Death is mighty, but Love is stronger than Death. Speak—speak now." And so he would; why should he not? It was but a moment; thoughts flashed through his mind like lightning; he saw only the one image, as a man slain in battle might see with dying eyes the figure of some saving angel which lingered near him a moment as though waiting to hear if he would call. Was not she waiting to bless him? He would throw himself at her feet and ask her to save him from despair.

He took a quick step forward. Evelyn raised her mild, unfathomable eyes; something in the quiet, far-off look in them made Harringford hesitate, even with the burning words hovering, like flame, upon his lips.

"Tell me," she said, in sweet, low tones which fell upon his soul like a death-knell—"tell me, do you think it possible for the dead to come back and make themselves known to the living?"

Harringford turned suddenly, as though a sword had pierced him through, battling fiercely, but blindly, with his fate. Surely the raging tumult in his heart would be heard, if he did not quickly regain himself.

He took a step or two with averted face, and when he spoke his voice rang sharply under the strain of enforced composure.

"I can hardly tell," he answered. I have always believed it possible, yet without reason. I have never seen anything to prove it, at all. Why?" he added, stopping again before her.

"Because," she said, looking at him, calmly—"because I saw Harry last night, in this very spot. I was sitting here alone, watching the moon-rise and thinking of the old days—and in the midst of it all I became conscious of a presence near me; without feeling at all frightened, I looked about me and saw a figure approaching—from the wood. It came on, without making the least sound and with no hesitation, until it reached the shadow of those bushes yonder, where it stopped, and then for the first time I recognized it. It was Harry, looking just like I saw him last, with the same suit of light gray; his head was uncovered, and his hair seemed blown and dishevelled, half hiding his brow and eyes; there was something wavering and uncertain about his figure, it seemed to me to sway with every movement of the air. Perhaps

it was only for an instant, but it seemed a long time that he stood looking at me. I tried hard to speak, but could not, and while I watched, feeling as though walled about with the oppressive silence which I could not break, he turned away and disappeared, just as he had come, walking, slowly and noiselessly, back into the shadows of the trees, where he vanished.

"I don't know how long I sat looking after him, but at last my fan slipped from my hand, and so startled me that I sprang to my feet, and for the first time felt afraid. I almost ran along the path toward the house, and met Aunt Delia and Mr. Lubbock coming to look for me. Don't you think it very strange? I thought I should have been frightened to death."

"Strange?—yes," said Harringford. "These apparitions are only projections of the mind, as they say, perhaps, but it is a very strange thing, very." He walked away a few paces and returned. Within the last few moments his sensations might be compared with those of a man who, by sheer force of will and determined self-assertion, had been able, for a little, to overbear the forces of nature, and had suddenly found himself equal to some supernatural feat—such as walking upon the water or the air, but who, being suddenly surprised out of himself, or, rather, back into himself, had suddenly sunk in the waves or fallen back upon the earth with

the crushing weight of his own weakness and all the unutterable sense of defeat and vain regret returned upon him; but forever afterward filled with the belief that, but for that unfortunate diversion from his purpose he might have succeeded, would have been able to stand unharmed upon the moving hills of the ocean or to have walked above the thunder along the pathway of the storm.

Harringford had attempted a very much greater achievement and had, as he believed, failed.

In accordance with the natural processes which govern the minds, and, consequently, the actions of men, he had sought Evelyn mainly for the purpose of knowing her mind respecting Ainsworth; to find out, in short, if she firmly believed him dead; but suddenly feeling within himself a sense of some god-like power, he had determined to take his fate in his own hands.

He was weary of walking in the dark. He would put all to the test and stand or fall by the issue. If he were doomed, at least he would know it; so, inspired by the thought that "love is stronger than death," he had faced Evelyn, not, now, to ask about Ainsworth, but to ask the question of questions, upon the answer of which all things in life, for him, seemed now to depend.

It is a fine thing, this divine daring to outface

destiny; this laying of strong hands upon the web of our fate with the will to break through it, let come what may; a very fine thing, but futile.

Harringford realized the truth of this as he stood looking out into the darkness. Perhaps it was true then and Ainsworth had really been able to return from the unknown land, and again the words came into his mind, but with new import, "Love is stronger than death."

"It is very strange," he found himself repeating again. Evelyn raised her eyes, questioningly. She had lifted the strands of silken bark from her knees and was now twisting them together like a bracelet about her white arm.

"How graceful, how inimitable is her every movement," thought Harringford, with a pang of bitterness. He was standing before her, his head thrown back, his arms folded high upon his breast, his eyes looking steadily through the gathering twilight, afar into the unthinkable depths, the mysterious infinitude of the overarching sky. Anon his thoughts came back to the question which he had at first proposed to himself; it seemed commonplace enough now.

"Have you ever thought it possible, Miss Evelyn, that Harry might still be alive; ever doubted that he is dead?"

"Never," she answered, quickly, "never for an instant. I *know* he is dead." Then more

slowly, and with tears showing in her eyes. "Nothing but death could have kept him—nothing."

"Yes, yes," said Harringford. "I feel that what you say is true. The heart that truly loves, divines the truth, though every sense should plead counter and oppose belief. Love is the only lantern for this night of life."

There was in these words of Harringford's such a tone of hopeless wretchedness, something so eloquent of unconscious despair, that the mere sound of his voice as he uttered them awakened in Evelyn's soul some unsuspected chords untouched before. She never afterward was able to forget the words nor the voice in which they were spoken.

With a heavy sigh, Harringford sank down on the seat beside her, and leaning forward, buried his face in his hands. He was unconscious, seemingly, of her presence. Once more he saw before his eyes the same message, bearing still another meaning and written upon the blackness as though in letters of flame, the words "Love is stronger than Death"; and as Harringford read them, in this new light, all hope seemed slipping away out of his heart forever—and yet—, if he had looked but once into the eyes that were turned upon him at that moment, new hope, new life, would have sprung up in his soul as a fountain springs in the midst

of the desert. But he did not look; he felt that he could not without being betrayed. He struggled for calmness, still hiding his face and hoping that Evelyn would speak and break the silence; but that she could not do. She was herself in need of help; her bewildered senses seemed unable alike either to confirm a doubt or dispel a conviction; if she should speak, what should she say? What ought she to say? And so these two troubled souls so shaken by passion, so rich in all that goes to make up the value, the beauty of life, for lack of one poor word, were about to drift apart, when they had come within reach of each other's help, at last; help so much needed and help that none other could give. So it is; the impassable gulf is often but a hand's-breadth. If only we might know!

Thus might two friends, upon a mountain lost,
  Meet on the clouded summit, face to face;
Both faint from dread and toil of chasms crossed;
  And for the need of one ray to displace
The blinding mist which kept them still unseen,
Die, both, despairing—one short step between.

Thus might two wrecked souls, thinking miles of seas
  Held them apart, strive, lonely, in one wave,
Touch hands and sink; not knowing they should be
  Laid side by side, like lovers, in one grave.
So, like a wall of worlds, a veil may hide;
An inch of darkness, like a gulf, divide.

And so these two, each ignorant of the other's state, needed but a word, a touch, to bring their souls together; a word only, but there was no tongue to speak it.

Evelyn sat silent, trembling, not knowing how to offer the sympathy which was ready to overflow from her full heart. At last, as though moved by some divine instinct, she reached out her hand to lay it on Harringford's wrist. The gentle fingers touched softly against his hair as they descended; but, at that moment voices were heard, and Harringford roused himself suddenly, pushing his locks back hastily from his burning temples, and as he did so his hand struck against Evelyn's. He felt the touch, but thought it only an accident, and rising to his feet, he turned to face again the every-day world, the old inadequacy of the usual life. Evelyn's Aunt Delia, with John Lubbock, had come to join them.

"Have you ever noticed the cultivated jimson, Mr. Harringford," she was saying, holding the white trumpet-like-looking flower toward him.

"Yes," said Harringford, "it is a fair flower to come from the deadly nightshade." Taking the flower in his hand, and turning to Evelyn, he continued: "This should go to you. There is no telling what it might not become in your hands."

Evelyn took the flower and stood looking at it sadly. John Lubbock now began profusely setting forth to the Aunt Delia the glories of some place to which he proposed they should walk, and he was putting a good deal of vigor into his work; the fact was he was keeping this Aunt Delia pretty busy, all in all, and Harringford, as he watched him now, could scarcely repress a smile, noting his unwonted enthusiasm. Lubbock prevailed, however, and they all started on the little journey, Lubbock, with the Aunt Delia, leading the way. Harringford glanced back toward the spot which Evelyn and he had just quitted, and, excusing himself to her for a moment, hurried back, and at last, after some looking, picked up something from the grass.

It was the bracelet of twisted fibres, which Evelyn had thrown away.

"What do you want with that?" she said, as he returned holding it in his hand.

"I have lost my soul, I think, within the last half hour, and it is just possible it is in some way bound up in this," he answered, thrusting the bracelet into his bosom. "You never can tell exactly where your soul is; at least so it is with me. Half of the time it is out of my body, it seems to me, wandering about without lodgement or shelter. Sometimes I just catch it tumbling headlong over some dizzy cliff, or just barely succeed in dragging it back from where

it has wedged itself between the arms of the coral, in some green-shadowed, dreadful depth of the ocean. It makes me no end of grief, and I could wish it were, like the body of Polonius, 'safely stowed.' It would not greatly matter to me how or where. If it might be locked in a casket or sealed up in a marble urn, or even wrapped up as a piece of common merchandise to be laid away, I wouldn't care greatly how, so it might be disposed of in some out-of-the-way corner, anywhere, and I left in peace from it forever."

"Oh, Mr. Harringford," exclaimed Evelyn, "you ought not to talk like that, really, you ought not."

"And why not?" said Harringford, with a bitter smile. "The king, crowned of sorrow and whose narrowing dominion, like mine, is eternally hedged about with the dancing phantoms from the pit, must needs play his own fool and find his merriment in the pain which tortures him."

For a little space they walked on together in silence, when Evelyn, lifting her head, seemed about to speak, but at that moment they came up with the others, and Lubbock, unusually gay in manner, broke in with some story he had on hand. He was in quite a gale, it appeared, as though some sudden stroke of good-fortune had befallen him.

Poor John; if he had known how far he was mistaken, how very inopportune had been his coming and the intrusion of the Aunt Delia with her "jimson flower," he would have carried that lady, hale and heavy as she was, to the tip-top of the mountain before he would have allowed her to interfere; as it was, he was greatly charmed with himself and all things about him, and Harringford joined him, with a reckless gayety that might have passed for mirth, but the bitterness with which he spiced his speeches did not escape Evelyn, and she returned from the walk with drooping spirits, her heart weighed down with a sadness such as she had never known before.

That night, Harringford bade good-by to Evelyn and her aunt together, saying he would leave very early in the morning. Both expressed sorrow at his going and urged him to stay, but "No," he said, "he had much to do—he had been very idle—work was waiting—he had stayed long, quite too long—hoped they would meet in the city," and so on and so on, with many such like patent phrases which pass smoothly between people, their corners being worn away by much use. His manner was reserved, almost cold.

Evelyn went away, silently, with her Aunt Delia to her room, and Harringford, after lighting a cigar and begging Lubbock not to wait for

him, walked out again into the darkness. The thought of rest was far from him.

Although it was very late when he returned to the house, a number of people were still in the brilliantly lighted parlor. Some one was singing, and singing well, too. Harringford drew near and listened. The clear, sweet voice was wailing forth the refrain of a wild heart-breaking song:

> All hearts have once their songs,
> Though they be dead ;
> Each spirit knows its wrongs,
> There is no soul but longs
> For something fled.

With a sigh that was more like a stifled moan, Harringford passed on and sought his room ; but not to sleep.

In the chill dimness of the morning Evelyn was awakened by the heavy grinding of wheels upon the gravel near the window. She listened to the hurried trampling to and fro and to the rumbling of the trunks being dragged along the porch floor. They were well-known sounds which told unmistakably of some early departure. So Harringford was going!

A strange sense of loss came over her at the thought ; she arose and stole softly on the carpet to the window and peeped out through

the shutters. There was the coach, with the burly form of the driver perched on the high seat; the unreal-looking horses, champing their bits and nodding their impatient heads up and down, and beyond them the blended and uncertain outlines of the spectral landscape; all was shrouded in a gray mist, with which the half-light struggled feebly.

They were hoisting Harringford's trunk to the top of the coach. Evelyn's eye caught sight of the initials, R. H., and with a strange persistency her mind filled out the blank with the full name, which she repeated mechanically to herself, over and over again.

Anon she heard Harringford's voice; he was directing one of the servants to get inside with the rest of his traps; he would ride outside with the driver. He came and stood not far from the window, pulling on his gloves. He wore a long gray ulster and had his cap drawn down almost to his eyebrows; for a moment only he turned his face. He was very pale, and looked quite unlike himself, Evelyn thought; all his features seemed sharpened by the cold. The swift glance which he cast toward her window had in it the unmistakable tragic quality of all unspoken farewells.

Evelyn started as though he had really seen her, her heart beating wildly. She watched him as he climbed to the seat and arranged the rug

about him with firm and certain touches, well betokening the character of the man.

The voice of the driver sounded, there was the sudden clattering of hoofs, mingled with the jingling and rattling of chains and the grinding of wheels; in a moment the tall vehicle seemed fading into a cloud; the figures on the top became but swaying phantoms of the mist: a moment more and all was gone—vanished —like a vision. It was the end of October. In a few days Evelyn was to start with her aunt on a journey which was so planned that it was to reach everywhere and stop nowhere; it would be a whole year before she would return. A year! She stood peering out through the shutter. So he was gone! There was nothing to be seen save the chill, gray clouds which wrapped the sleeping trees on the mountain's top, which seemed lonely and dreary now. The tears came into her eyes, blinding her vision, and a little shiver ran through her frame. Sighing, she turned away, and creeping back into her warm bed, she buried her face in the pillow.

PART THREE

THE THREAD OF SCARLET

No more to sigh for love, nor seek
  The clasp of white and dimpled hands;
No more to turn when lips shall speak,
  Nor stay when some soft eye commands;
No more to bend with spirit meek,
  Fast held in slight and silken bands.

No more—no more! The whirling earth
  May spin to meet the burning sun;
I shall not hear the sounds of mirth,
  Nor know when triumphs shall be won;
No house have I, nor home, nor hearth—
  With hopeless hoping I have done.

THE world is full of heroism. How many are the trembling hands that are unceasingly busy with the skein which fate has given and with which they must be content to weave their portion. While the anxious eyes look in vain for the golden thread of happiness that should be there, yet the hands do not remain idle. The bitter tears may fall down upon the gray flaxen threads, but no one sees them, and the hands do not falter; perhaps the despairing heart sinks

at sight of the plainness of the fabric which is being woven, the thin lips may grow more painfully colorless, and sighs of weariness or sorrow may from time to time escape them, yet they utter no words of complaint, and the dull threads are woven into the colorless web until the skein is used up, and the task—the task, so hopefully begun, so hopelessly and uncomplainingly performed—is done at last. Earth has no field that may grow golden flax and if we will have threads of scarlet our own hearts must furnish drops to dye them.

October was come again, and the little locust-leaves, slowly crisping in the mellow sunshine, fell down, from time to time, upon the weedy grasses about the old Harringford house, silently indicating that the dream of summer had departed from the earth. Here and there the yellow and small white butterflies flitted dreamily over the unregarded ground. The morning-glory vines ran riot everywhere, so that one might fancy there were wandering bands of small unseen spirits lifting their delicately tinted trumpets in the cool morning air and blowing a voiceless dirge for the dying year, so fragile and so divinely beautiful were they.

Now and then one might see the royal purple plume of a late-blooming iron-weed glowing amidst the sombre company of his fellows, and all along the highways the golden-rod was

glorious. Now and then a shower of flame and crimson mocked the sun.

Ruy Harringford took a quiet pleasure in all these things. He was continually gathering and treasuring up—garnering in his mind, one might say—transcripts, remembrances, of these ever-changing, ever-beautiful phases of nature, reproducing them for contemplation in his lonely hours to his own great pleasure and spiritual profit. He was, indeed, become a true devotee, a serious lover of Nature. He had reached a new world, by a painful path, it is true, but he had reached it. The musk of meadows and mown fields was not with him a mere fancy; the solace of the silent woodlands had grown necessary to his very life, a certain hunger of the soul drove him continually to the fields. For the old world as it had once seemed to him, he cared less and less. Unconsciously, he had wrapped himself in a kind of cloud. He walked abroad much and alone, not because he would have chosen it so, but real companionship had become well-nigh impossible. There are moods into which no other souls can enter.

He was an earnest student and a steady worker. He had missed the golden thread in his skein, but many a scarlet one, of his own heart's dyeing, glowed in the woof of his life's work. His pen was seldom idle. There was scarcely a day in which he did not write some-

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thing. Essays and short romances were, one after another, finished and thrown aside, to lie forgotten among the heaps of papers upon his table. If he was ambitious, it was for something above and beyond the passing praise of the world. His name was already well-known, and his latest efforts had brought both praise and money, but nothing seemed to touch him further. Lubbock would come in, glowing, with his great generous heart full of unselfish joy over some piece of good-fortune, but if Harringford's soul was stirred, it was too deep down to show a ripple on the surface.

"Yes, yes, my dear John," he would say, "*these things come; but they come too late.*"

As for the money, he paid no attention to it whatever, and Lubbock assumed a care for which he expected no thanks; yet Harringford was not all unmindful.

"We shall see by and by what fate intends," he said to Lubbock one day. "I shall die first, but—I foresee for you the slow decline, the easy slope that finds a quiet vale, the temperate tippling on old-memory wines, the tottering staff, the 'lean and slippered pantaloon,' but for your heart, John, your *soul*—there is for that no shrunken shank, no lean and slippered age. You will be always young, therefore remember. *This*, taking up one after another the sealed manuscripts: "this is for a quiet summer by the

sea, and this is a jaunt to the mountains, and this—it is a little thin, but it will be worth more when I am dead, perhaps—is to cheer some dull winter's night with friends and good wine. Do you hear, dear John? I am making my will. You are standing between me and the world now; it will be I—" tapping with his finger the tablet in which he had been writing last —"I who will then stand betwixt the world and you. My will is written and you are my inheritor."

And poor Lubbock, stifling with his emotions, overawed by the influence of Harringford's powerful and prescient spirit, could make no answer save by the hand-clasp which both understood to mean a sealing of their soul's compact.

Harringford was living alone in the old house; taking his meals, for the most part, with Lubbock, at his sister's.

A mysterious cloud, an atmosphere of dread, hung about the place like a persistent shadow. So peopled with unthinkable terrors was it, that no negro having any inkling of what had happened there, could have been induced, by any bribe whatsoever, to cross the terror-mantled threshold; so that even the servant who cared for Harringford's rooms came only in the mornings, and he—even then, when the sunshine outside made mock at fear—never passed the

door of an empty room or made a journey to the cellar without icy thrills of expectation, quick throbbings of the heart, and frantically suspicious glances over his shoulder, whenever any sound broke upon the dismal and mouldy stillness which pervaded the hollow loneliness of the place.

Harringford occupied the room which had been Ainsworth's study. Many things had been removed into another room across the hall. The high book-case, containing Ainsworth's books, still remained, and on its top—where Ainsworth's own hand had placed it—was the bouquet of autumn leaves, browned now with age, shrivelled and covered with dust. The same large square table still stood in the centre of the floor, and neatly arranged on one corner of it were certain writing-tablets and scraps of scribbled paper that had been preserved with tender care, and just over the mantel-piece, on a small red-wood bracket, was a square of cardboard on which a large butterfly, with outspread wings, seemed resting, lightly and daintily, as if in life. It was the one Ainsworth had caught and placed there on that last morning. It was a habit with Harringford, in moments of deep thought, to fix his eyes absent-mindedly on this creature, gazing on it until he could have sworn that the broad wings, with their wonderful "eyes," were moving

gently, up and down, as if in dreamy flight. Again and again he had risen, to assure himself, by a closer inspection, that this was but a trick of the mind.

It may have been—who knows—it may have been the blind and unconscious obedience which all men render to some unknown, unrecognized force that had at last anchored Harringford alone in this fateful spot.

It may have been a specific result, a natural compliance with some insistent and unreasonable instinct of the spirit; for the soul does not need to render continual account at the bar of the mind. Its purposes are not all unfolded nor its plans laid bare for the acceptance of the intellect; on the contrary, the mind recognizes in this strange essence, this *soul*, something of that unfathomable divinity in whose presence the intellect becomes a mere unconsulted and astonished spectator, a dumb dwarf that can only behold and wonder. But aside from these, Harringford might have detected, floating on his mental horizon, certain film-like, cloudy semblances of will; undetermined, dim, defiant thoughts; unshaped reasons suggesting that he should be in that place, inducing him to stay in that very room, waiting, watching for some sign. Perhaps he had concluded—like many of us—that our theories respecting this existence are all guesswork. Perhaps, in summing up upon

the result of all his own spiritual endeavors to gain even short glimpses into that mystic region of half-guessed possibilities which seems always to lie so closely about us, he was brought to say to his own heart—as all men who will be simply honest with their own souls must say—*I do not know.*

What if it should be that Ainsworth *might* return—why not? The spirit is the real man. What do we know of the soul's limitations? What do we *know* of anything? We dream, we guess, we surmise, until we ourselves pass on and out into that unknown, unknowable beyond; not knowing if we shall then know the truth about the things of which we can at our best now only conjecture. So Harringford's thoughts ran on.

And if Ainsworth should indeed find himself really himself, in that after-life, would he have forgotten, all? Would he not remember his life-long friend—would he not guess anything of all the anxiety and distress, and if he should find it possible to come back—in any shape—would it not be, most like, to this friend, who could comprehend, who would so well understand, and whose waiting spirit stood—as though it were on the shore of life—looking continually out across that dim, far-rolling sea, listening for the faintest whisper that might come out of the darkness; and of all places on

the earth, might he not be expected to choose this old familiar room as the place of his appearing?—this scene of the dear earthly labors in which his heart had found such delight; here, where he had lived the happiest hours of life; would he not recall it all? Would the soul so change that there would be no remembrance, no love of these things which once made up the sum of all it could know of joy and pleasure?

Day after day, and night after night, all this visioning, all these vexed imaginings, passed before Harringford's mind in a thousand changing forms. Like most men of any depth whatever, who have suffered great disappointments and heavy griefs, Harringford had become somewhat absolute in his manner of thought. The world's accepted theories had little or no hold upon him. For all dogma, as such, he had only contempt, and like all men who really think deeply, he was impatient of the shallow satisfaction peculiar to the multitudes that are held, like caterpillars, in the silken webs of their own spinning; although he recognized, well enough, that while there will be worms, there might be webs. He grew weary of his own doubt. What he longed for, with unutterable longing, was to know, just *to know*, something; some one thing on which he might build with absolute certainty!

If—he contended—the soul *be* immortal, it is

immortal now, while it is in the body, and if this death be but the freeing of the soul from the body, the soul—being still the same soul—*must* remember. To say that it at once forgets; that it no longer loves those in whose affections it found itself blest, here, is to say that the soul is dead, which—if the soul be indeed immortal—is an impossibility; therefore, if the soul shall *be* at all, it must be itself, and remembers and loves as before; and so, might it not seek to return? And if it be *not* itself, then—there is nothing beyond this dream at all, and we are quits. And so it came to be that Harringford felt at times he would not be surprised if Ainsworth should actually appear before him, and with this mind he lived his strange and lonely life, no longer rebelling against fate, but looking steadily forward, as a man who goes into battle not caring if he fall. Oh, this overmastering consciousness; this painful recognition of the wonderful beauty of life, its immeasurable-seeming possibilities, its hard-set limitations, the weariness of it all. Who hath not felt his soul stir within him only to recoil, aghast, catching, as in a flash, a lightning-like glimpse of the inevitable trend of all things.

One evening while Harringford sat reading, he heard the front door open and slow feet heavily ascending the stair, but the sounds so blended with his thoughts that the feet seemed

progressing along the lines before his eyes, as in a dream, and it was not until Lubbock had opened the door that he lifted his eyes from the page and smiled a vague welcome upon his friend.

"Come back, if you can, Ruy, from wherever you are, and let us talk awhile. You read too much, entirely too much, of late," he said, taking a seat in the chair which always stood ready for him; "entirely too much. Here, have a good weed—rather have your pipe, eh—well, light up and let us have a cheerful smoke. I tell you, you are coming on, old man! that last story of yours is going to score you a good broad mark. You are cutting a wider swath than you could have done three years ago. Ruy, you'll put up a wind-row with the best of them yet—'*New-mown hay and the dying daisies*'—that's what they say of it."

Harringford's face, which looked very pale in the lamplight, flushed slightly and a strange light flashed for an instant in his eyes, as when a white flame bursts from a column of smoke. He relinquished his book, turning the open page downward upon the table, and, as he did so, the trembling fingers and swollen veins of his hand showed how fiercely the hidden heart was beating.

"What do you read?" asked Lubbock.

"Fisk—Fisk's 'Destiny of Man.' It's beauti-

ful but not comforting," Harringford answered. "He foreshadows an ultimate, a final good, but he unconsciously lays bare the cruelty of nature. The individual goes down in the march. The salvation that shall save us has not yet been found. I think Drummond inspires more hope, but," he added, drearily, "he, too, turns to foolishness; however, I suppose anything will do, while it shall seem to engage us until we have passed from this vale. The destiny of man must be settled somewhere. Perhaps we see but little of the truth, but the little we do see is, I fear, not greatly conducive to a flow of spirits."

"I fear you are turned misanthrope, Ruy; you ought to let these things alone. After all, there is little use in thinking; you know the words of the greatest of all teachers, the great philosopher, 'Take no thought for the morrow.' We can add nothing to our stature by taking thought; but, speaking of the destiny of man, it's my own particular destiny that weighs upon my mind, now that I have found it out. Look at me, Ruy! do I look like a confidence man?"

"Well, I have seen men I should have suspected sooner," said Harringford, laughing a little. "What do you mean?"

"Well!" continued Lubbock, bracing his well-rounded figure back in the chair "I have found out that *my* destiny is to inspire confidence in everybody; you don't see it, eh? Well, I'll

show you. I have become a regular reservoir; the unwilling keeper of a thousand unsolicited confidences. I know— The phase of my life which you know best might not lead you to think it, but I have another world in which I am obliged to live and move and have my being; and there, in that world, every irresponsible and newly-inspired mortal who gets it into his head that he has made a brilliant discovery, namely, that it is not good for man to be alone, makes it his duty to seek me out, and I am made at once the confidant of all his hopes and fears and must give my advice. Well, you can imagine how it is. I have gotten now so that I know them as soon as they fasten their eyes on me, and I have always advised for marriage, seeing that their happiness seemed to lie that way, and, as a result, I am absolutely weighed down now, under an accumulation of responsibilities of which I never dreamed, and the growing bulk of them is threatening to crush me to the earth, and—What is that, Ruy?" Lubbock exclaimed, breaking off suddenly.

"What is what?"

"That noise—didn't you hear a noise just now—downstairs?"

"I heard something. I thought it was just the wind outside," said Harringford, going to the door. Lubbock arose, and both men listened. A sound, like quick, soft footsteps came up

from below and a draught of cool fresh air rose in their faces as they leaned over the balustrade.

"John, did you leave the front door open?"

"Why, no—I don't think so—maybe I did fail to fasten it securely," Lubbock said, doubtfully.

Certain remembrances had come back to both men as their eyes met with startled meaning glances. There came a sound as of a door closed softly.

"Wait," said Harringford, "I'll get a light and we'll go down. I think you have left the front door open."

They went down the stair together. The front door stood wide open, and two or three large dried sycamore leaves rustled along the naked floor of the hall, pursued by slight, whirling gusts of the fitful wind. They closed the door and went back through the empty house, looking cautiously about and listening from time to time, but they heard only the echoes of their own footsteps, mocking, suggestive sounds, that died away, slowly, in the hollow rooms.

"Must have been the wind," said Lubbock, as they retraced their steps.

He was convinced, however, that he had heard steps of some sort, and he noticed the agitation which Harringford tried in vain to hide. A sudden resolution shaped itself in his mind,

and by the time they had reached the room again he determined what to do.

For a little while he sat talking, glibly and aimlessly, smoking vigorously and sending great puffs half way across the room, to the great consternation of a few antique mosquitoes that were dangling, in a state of chronic agitation, about the lamp-shade.

Harringford sat listening in silence, and as Lubbock watched him now, he realized fully, for the first time, how strangely listless and preoccupied was his manner, and noticed his unchanging pallor and his thin, nervous hands, with the thumbs ever turning inward, to be clasped tightly against the palms.

"What memories are these," thought Lubbock, "which keep tugging at his heart; what is it that he should keep it from *me?*"

And he recalled again the words Harringford had uttered once when he had sought to come closer to his life: "I have an old trouble which I must learn to bear. There is no help for it here." "No help!" Something in Lubbock's heart rebelled against these words. His love for Harringford was even greater than he himself was aware. *Why* should there be "*no help?*" The thought maddened him. "Ruy," he said, "I have a favor to ask of you." Harringford looked up, questioning.

"I have an old friend who lives among the

hills near Fern-cliff Springs; I am going there to visit for a week—a week or ten days—and I want you to go with me. I need not tell you that you will be welcome. It is rather a peculiar old place, and the country about it is, I think, strangely interesting. It has a quality of suggestiveness, something above mere picturesqueness; I think you would be inspired by it. You might make it the scene for a story—and the autumn coloring is gorgeous—I know you would enjoy it. We will drive, and I want to start very early in the morning, so you will better just get what you need into your valise and come with me now." Then seeing an expression of reluctance coming over Harringford's face, he continued: "Don't disappoint me, Ruy, I have set my heart on this. Sister will have a nice little breakfast for us, and I want you to come home with me to-night."

And his face wore such a look of anxiety that Harringford at once consented and began making ready.

Half an hour later they went forth together. The wind swept about the old house wrathfully, making the tall weeds nod stiffly and fretting the dead leaves which had taken shelter in the eddy by the great stone step.

The locust-trees moaned and creaked, and rattled their brittle branches against the wall of the house as though battling with their own

shadows, which swayed back and forth mimicking their slightest movements, and the flame in the solitary gas-lamp, out among the sycamores, was so blown and vexed that at times it threatened to cease altogether and leave the restless branches to fight it out in the dark alone. The gloomy portal was passed, the door was drawn shut with a bang, the key turned with a grating protest, the heavy lock snapped sullenly, the two figures passed out through the gate, and the first step toward the final revelation which was to clear up the mystery of Harry Ainsworth's disappearance was taken at last.

Although Lubbock himself was a little slow in his movements, generally, his wits were quick enough when once seriously aroused, so that he had little trouble to give his hastily arranged visit all the air of a fore-intended and duly premeditated affair. In truth, he had promised to make this visit, but had about given up hoping that he could find time for it, so that now—confident of the welcome which awaited them—he had not hesitated to make use of a circumstance so happily suited to his sudden purpose—a purpose which sprang out of his deep affection for his friend. He thought he saw the necessity for an effort to divert Harringford's mind. He felt that he must do something to make a break in that steady current of thought as one might

roll a stone into a stream, forcing it, for a little at least, to change its channel.

Harringford's mental drift seemed to him like the smooth and glassy movement of deep water when it runs straight and swift and silent toward a sudden plunge, a headlong leap into the abyss.

The moment this sudden fear was born in him, he wondered he had not felt it long ago. But he was a man subject only to spasms of mental alertness. His mind was not of that character which is unconsciously and continually active, like a bow that is always bent, with the arrow of attention drawn to the barb; so that things came to him, usually, unannounced —fully rounded up, as when a man, mistaking moonlit water for a smooth solid rock, steps boldly out and finds himself floundering wildly, the treacherous current roaring in his ears, and the whole world transformed for him on the instant. And so it was that Lubbock frequently found himself struggling in a kind of desperation, with some sudden and unlooked-for realization. This is, to some degree, the manner of us all, and otherwise, perhaps, much of life's happiness would be done away. Sometimes, indeed, a strange indwelling spirit seems to compel a continually sustained alertness—an eternal projection and forecasting of thought in some powerful mind—then, we have the seer,

the prophet; but no true prophet was ever a happy man.

What the eagle fails to see, the earthworm knows. So in the case of Ainsworth, where intellect had failed, where reason had been baffled, and where thought had blindly gone astray, the subtle instinct of nature, working dumbly, without direction or intent, was destined to succeed; revealing, at last, the unguessed truth which should lead to the complete solution of this painful mystery.

Harringford's visit was, perhaps, pleasant enough. He was possessed of a genuine and almost childlike curiosity—which is, after all, the health of the mind — and the interest awakened by the scenes among which he wandered at will, though it was very quiet, was nevertheless deep;

> —for sorrow hears
> With quicker sense
> Than careless joy, and seeks in field and stream
> A recompense
> For harsher notes, which fret the cords of music's wonted dream.

We need only relate one incident of this visit. Lubbock had seemed to shake himself loose from the world. He cast off utterly at least thirty of the four and forty years that time had put upon him, and burst every fetter which his

humdrum life had riveted upon his spiritual limbs. He scoured about the fields like an urchin of twelve, waded in the brook, fished for minnows, and pursued with persistent ingenuity the frantic and indignant crawfish; fell into the water, and laughed so loudly as to frighten the wondering sheep almost out of their wool. There was nothing so absurd that he would not undertake it. There were no remembered boyish tricks that he did not try. He attempted to climb for nuts, got to the first bough, broke it, and fell with a thud that shook the earth. He tried to "skin the cat," and failed to make the turn, in which plight he would have died of apoplexy if Harringford had not come to his relief. He ran imminent risks of his life, with bulls and vicious rams, making hair-breadth and breathless escapes.

Deep as had been Harringford's love for him, it now grew deeper every day. He felt the charm of something which words cannot exactly express; he was lured away from the careful sadness of his life, and made to laugh until the tears rolled down his cheeks. Two days before he would not have believed it possible.

In the midst of all this, however, a jealous and unrelenting fate, waiting, sword in hand, made a sudden thrust out of the bitter past, and reached her truant with the biting point.

It happened that one day Lubbock had been

carried away by some friends on a hunting expedition, and Harringford, not feeling inclined to go, had remained at home, alone. Toward evening—having been wandering about all day—he was standing at last near the great highway, resting, and dreamily watching the sunset which burned through the tree-tops, dulling the splendors of the autumnal forest. Slowly the flames waned and a soft rose-tint was spreading, fan-like, far up into the luminous silver and lilac of the changing sky. A few small clouds which floated like ships upon that distant heavenly sea, and which glowed like fire at first, were visibly darkening each moment.

On one of these Harringford had fixed his eyes, watching it with sorrowful thoughts.

"Is it true," he asked himself; "must all things fade like this—and why?" Where shall the human heart ever find an answer to that question?

Presently he heard voices and laughter mingled with the sound of wheels, and looking along the roadway, saw several vehicles coming. Involuntarily he retreated a few paces and waited till they could pass. The carriages were all open and he could distinctly see the inmates. The first two carriages had gone by—he had merely glanced at the people in them; the last one was just passing. He had been toying with some branches of a young tree against which he

leaned. Suddenly his hand closed about them with a straining grasp, and his eyes, wide with wonder, and glowing with the light of recognition, followed steadily the figure of Evelyn Weir until the carriage was out of sight. For a moment her face, smiling and happy-seeming, had been turned toward him, blotting out all else—as when a meteor falls upon our path; and the man who sat beside her, that tall figure, that broad florid face with the long yellow whiskers, floating jauntily from either cheek—where had he seen that man before?

Stunned, bewildered, and made suddenly wretched, he turned away blindly, and in his heedless haste tripped over something and fell, striking his hand against the bristling trunk of a thorny locust, lacerating it so that it began to bleed profusely. He scarcely noticed his hurt, but walked on mechanically, binding his handkerchief about his wounded hand, and thinking "wherewith shall one bind up a bleeding heart."

The rose-tint had deepened to crimson. A stretch of blue-gray cloud lay along the edge of the sky, and against that was limned the sad horizon of the world. A few stars blossomed slowly on the field of night, and the thin new moon, glimmering faintly, hung like a drawn bow in the west. The soft air, full of haunting whispers and burdened with heart-breaking remembrances of departed summers, came

slowly wandering past, bearing sweet odors from far-off lands, now melting into nothingness.

In the long grasses, glistening now and sere, the crickets chirped in merry chorus. The dead leaves rustled softly beside the twilight path—why do all these things find lodgement in the longing, hungering soul of man? What infinite capacity for bitter joys, what wild, enchanting sorrows!

As one walks in a dream, so Harringford moved on through the gloaming, seeing all, hearing all, yet neither looking nor listening. Nothing was lost, though he sought nothing. The soul—the mysterious spirit—now held sway alone and seemed to walk apart, beside his body, which stumbled on from field to field.

Now and then a startled bird, scared from its place of rest, fluttered away through the bushes, and once a rabbit scampered before him through the dusk.

The cattle, standing like motionless, dark spectres in the gloom, ceased to chew the cud for an instant, and stared at him as he passed.

He saw and noted all, but all was unreality. The world, himself, life and death, memory and hope, the laughter and the tears—an airy vision all, and he, a shadow; it was Ruy Harringford no more. What was this label on the crumbling clay? Who will christen the undying soul? He was a nameless entity, a spark,

struck out of that great universal spirit, alone, unhappy; wandering here, upon the hopeless earth. What was it all, this beautiful, cruel, fantastic dream? Why not break bonds, why not return to rest?

An hour later, Lubbock, not finding Harringford in his room, was sitting on the porch smoking, momentarily expecting him to appear.

"Mooning about in the fields, I suppose, and will be laid up with a cold next," was his inward impatient comment.

At last he arose and went up to Harringford's room with some thought of mending the fire, for the nights were growing chill. In one corner, on a table, a lamp was burning dimly and a pile of books, beside it, cast a dark shadow over one-half of the room. To the right of the fireplace, was a window in a shallow off-set, which looked out upon a stretch of fields. The long curtains were pulled aside and a large, cushioned arm-chair stood facing it, indistinguishable in the gloom. The small fire had burned low, and the red embers gave forth only a diffused and slumberous glowing. Lubbock drew up a capacious chair, which seemed, dumbly, to suggest ease and rest, for a shape like his, and having laid upon the fire a lump of coal, settled himself in front of it and watched, absently, the interesting processes of its slow disintegration and feeble, crackling combustion.

By and by, glancing toward the table, he noticed some half-folded sheets of paper lying, with lines of writing plainly visible under the glow of the lamp.

What then! perhaps Harringford had left a note—perhaps he had been called away! He arose and, going to the table, glanced over the sheets of paper, with a strange smile and a little exclamation of surprise. Arranging the light to suit him, he went back to his chair again, taking the papers with him. How many manuscripts, by that same hand, he had gone over. With a certain pride of critical judgment, inseparable from the literary instinct, he began to read:

Hath autumn clothed these hills serene
With glory, wrapping fold on fold;
The flame and crimson-clouded green,
The scarlet and——

"Well, may I be hanged! *This* is what he has come to—egad, it's worse with Ruy than I thought."

Then, settling his eye-glasses more firmly on his somewhat rebellious nose, he began again and read the verses, slowly and carefully, twice over.

Hath autumn clothed these hills serene
With glory, wrapping fold on fold;
The flame and crimson-clouded green,
The scarlet and the gold.

These hills, that neither strive nor pray,
  Nor weep for hopes unsatisfied;
But only thus unmoved alway,
  In changeless peace abide.

No longing and no pain, no care—
  No heart-ache and no wounding fears;
No shattered faith, no soul's despair,
  No sighing and no tears!

And yet—with budding breast, the Spring,
  Did bless them in her soft embrace,
And only loosed her clasp to bring
  The Summer in her place.

The languid, lavish Summer, warm
  With love did smother breast and brow;
And Autumn's jewelled, regal arm
  Is thrown around them now.

And I—alas!—whose troubled breast
  A hungering heart holds all the year,
What have I gained to make me blest,
  What joy doth seek me here?

O these! the mellowing golden lands!
  With riches heaped, all round me spread;
And I—I lift my empty hands
  To hide the tears I shed!

Unsatisfied, unsatisfied!
  What is this tie which holds me here?
Why in distress do I abide,
  And tempting rest so near?

Having finished, Lubbock arose and placed the manuscript where he had found it upon the

table, and turning the lamp lower, he put it down again behind the pile of books and went back to his chair, where he remained for some time lost in deep thought.

Like a great many other men, his ideas about poetry were not very well defined. He had always regarded it as a sort of misty, mystical island, separated entirely from the great continents of human thought and action; an island of uncertain boundary, full of strange and fantastic growth, whither unfortunate and self-exiled souls drifted, to wander about half hopelessly, breathing an unnatural atmosphere and groping forgetfully among the clouds, which distorted and magnified their proportions, whenever they were caught sight of by those who sometimes cast a glance that way from afar. Yet he was not insensible to the flattering blandishments of verse. The very movement and music of it tricked his mind into a sort of unwilling but sincere admiration; but he was content to allow himself to be pleased, without any very deep speculations as to the cause; which was perhaps wiser, after all.

But, at all events, the lines he had just read had set him to thinking. Perhaps there was something dwelling in his own heart that stirred responsive—some unsuspected chord which had been touched, however lightly.

His thoughts drifted up the shadowy pathway

of the past, along the ragged, ill-defined shores of the life that is lived. Ever and anon Ruy Harringford's face stood forth among the crowding, mask-like phantoms, and from him his thought wandered to Ainsworth and then to Evelyn. He, too, had seen her pass by. He thought it all over again—Ruy's return—his strange dream and Ainsworth's stranger disappearing—Evelyn's unswerving devotion to his memory and then—the image of the man he had seen beside her! It came to him—where had he seen him before? In vain he tried to remember.

In his revery his glance wandered toward the large chair which was turned to the window. A small jet of blazing gas, shooting out just then between the bars of the grate, like a little plume of flame, threw a sudden light over into the shadow.

Lubbock started violently. He was sure he had noticed a hand hanging down over the side of the old chair. He fixed his eyes on the spot and waited for another jet of blaze. Again the puff burst forth, shedding a vivid light for an instant. This time there was no mistake. It was a hand; partly hidden by a white wrapping, but the bandage had slipped and was partly hanging loosed, and partly resting upon the floor.

"Ruy!" he said, softly, "have you been here all this time?"

Not getting an answer, he arose, and going to the table, he turned the lamp up to a full blaze, and removing the shade, placed it so as to let the light shine full across the room.

Still he could make out nothing distinctly, for looking full at the light had blinded his vision, which was not very good at the best.

"Are you asleep, old man?" he said, a little uneasily, moving near to the chair, in which he now made out the figure of his friend, crouched down heavily, his head leaning forward and to one side, with one arm hanging supinely, till his hand almost touched the floor.

Lubbock had laid a finger gently on Harringford's shoulder and had opened his mouth to speak again, when he saw very plainly the handkerchief, partly bound about the hand but half loosed and hanging. It was dabbled with blood. Every faculty of Lubbock's mind and heart recoiled, reeling under the sudden shock, and, for an instant, there was an absolute blank. Then the crushing thought descended upon him, splitting the darkness like a bolt of lightning—forking, flashing, and crackling before his eyes. *Dead!* The earth seemed to sink under him like a plummet. The sky seemed to part and ebb away in ever-dividing fragments, while he alone remained, upheld in the thick blackness of the terror which closed about him. One thing other only was left from the faded earth

and heaven; one word, that loomed in huge letters, blazing upon that background of nothingness. The one word, *Dead!*

Not knowing what he did, he quickly got hold of Harringford under the arms; and so great was the energy lent him by his despair, that despite the disadvantage of his position, he lifted him out of the chair and was staggering backward toward the window. Painful as had been the last few moments, perhaps the unexpected transition was more painful, when, suddenly straightening himself, Harringford stumbled against the chair and caught Lubbock's arm to keep from falling, at the same time exclaiming,

"Look here, John, old man, what in the name of peace are you trying to do?"

Lubbock made no answer whatever—for the very good reason that he could not—and breaking away from Harringford he ran across the room, where he sank, kneeling beside the bed, and with his face buried in his hands, fell to sobbing like a child. And so we are, all, only children, when we are not acting.

His spiritual fabric had suffered such a fearful wrenching that it was not an easy matter to readjust it, and it was some time after before Harringford's kindly efforts could restore him to anything like his wonted moral equilibrium, so rudely had the soul's balance been jostled.

Even after he had become comparatively calm, the ground-swell of his vexed emotions would burst the door of speech with half-angry mutterings and exclamations.

"Well, confound a man, anyway," he would say, recalling the outrageous shock and the accidental causes which had led up to it, "confound a man who rambles about all day hunting for a good place to fall and tear his hands to rags and then comes home, and, after writing a string of idiotic verses, sits down in the dark to sleep and bleed, with equal felicity and indifference. Confound such a man, I say."

An evening or two later found Harringford at home again, trying to take up the thread of his interrupted labors. But it was sorry work. There was a burning pain at his heart. The vision of Evelyn as she sat, radiant and smiling, beside the florid stranger in the carriage, was always before him. He had always thought of Evelyn as one sanctified by sorrow—removed, by her devotion to the memory of his friend, far above the common world and its everyday trivialities; walking, surrounded by a halo which wrapped her like a celestial garment, upon a plane all unknown to ordinary mortals. Was it all a mistake? Was everything a mistake? Was it for this he had abstained from speaking his heart to her, lest he should grate upon the sacred silence of her sorrowful remembrance?

He grew heart-sick and weary of thinking. By and by Lubbock happened in, and Harringford was glad to see him. He always seemed to bring with him an atmosphere of hope and comfort.

"Well, have you got back all your scattered wits yet, John?"

"No, that I have not; at least half of them are sailing around Fern-cliff Springs still— Oh, did you know Miss Weir has returned?"

"No—yes—I guessed so," said Harringford. "I saw her passing with some others—on their way from the railway station, I imagine."

"Yes, I saw her; but have you heard the news about her?"

"News—no—about her?" Harringford felt the blood gathering heavily about his heart. "What is it?" he asked, trying to make his voice steady.

"Well, she is to be married soon—so they say—and who do you think 'the minion of fortune' is? You—do you remember a long-legged Englishman we saw once at the sea-shore, worrying everybody's soul out with lawn-tennis? They met this summer, I believe, on the mountains, somewhere—Black Mountain, or Roan, one of those places; I never thought she would marry, and I am half-inclined to doubt the truth of the report, now; but there is no telling, a woman's heart—who knows what it is——"

He ran on, unconsciously but ruthlessly tearing away the last prop with which his friend had stayed his sinking soul. A heavy sigh made him look up to find Harringford's eyes—full of fierce questionings—fixed intently upon his own. The very quality of life seemed to have vanished out of the air, so vainly he labored for breath to form some words of reply. His tongue refused its office and his stiffened lips would utter nothing, but his whole heart spake in his eyes, and Lubbock read in them enough to make him guess the truth, and it was a recognition of this which made Harringford turn away, with a slight laugh of bitterness, still trying vainly to hide the utter wretchedness of his soul.

But why should he struggle always? Hope was gone now, and he grew suddenly weary, as he thought of life, with hope gone out of it, comfortless and dreary, as the sky without the sun. He saw the pitiful image of himself as a super-sentimental fool. He had waited, worshipping an exalted ideal whose very perfections had caused despair in him; but it had been something just to wait and worship, and now—the bank of sand on which he was standing was crumbling under his feet, and his beautiful ideal, the celestial image of his thoughts, was tottering to its fall. Something within him, mightier than himself, arose and arrayed itself against the implication, something that was like the

divine spirit in the hearts of heroes, which refuses to accept defeat.

"It is a falsehood! I would stake my soul upon it!" he said, fiercely, turning upon Lubbock. "What is there in that man to appeal to a woman like——"

A sudden sense of the consummate vanity of such a speech made him break off in the midst of it. He sat still and silent, feeling his cheeks burn with shame. Had not he had hopes—he—that she might forget? Had he not thought of himself as one worthy, perhaps, to be loved? Had not the words been upon his very lips? Why should he think himself the only one for whom she might forget the past? Alas, how hardly vanity dies within a man; it has more lives than the sky has stars. Harringford arose abruptly to his feet and walked to the window. He could not calmly entertain the picture of himself which the simple honesty of his mind presented before him. To be a fool, that could be borne, seeing it was the unhappy, but natural, condition of mankind—but to be a conceited fool—that was unbearable. He shook his head and threw his arms out wildly, as if to banish the thought forever.

"What is it, Ruy?" said Lubbock, who had been watching him; "is there nothing that can comfort you?"

Harringford turned and looked at him, noting

the expression of tender solicitude in his eyes: the patient, watchful, untiring devotion of an unfailing friend.

"Yes," said Harringford, coming nearer and seating himself, "there *is* something that can comfort me. The love and sympathy of the only soul that has never failed me."

After a slight pause he continued:

"I have a little story to tell you, John."

And beginning at the beginning, he gave his friend the history of his love for Evelyn, from the first. Lubbock listened quietly enough until it came to where—as he contended—Evelyn's aunt and himself had come upon the scene at a moment most inopportune—though, as a matter of fact, neither he nor Harringford could guess how inopportune — nevertheless the remembrance of it seemed to awake in Lubbock a kind of frenzy that might have been accounted divine, but for the profanity mingled with his fervid expressions of self-condemnation.

"But that maiden lady, Ruy—Heaven forgive me for referring to her in that manner—but you couldn't guess—" he went on to say, in an attempted extenuation—"she had the 'budges' to that extent, and was so beset with fidgeting to be with you two, that I thought I should lose my mind racking my brain for excuses to detain her. She exceeded all I have ever known."

And he became so wrought upon, thinking of

it, that Harringford had to change places with him and turn comforter himself, in order that he might be allowed to finish with the little which yet remained to be told, and at the end of it Lubbock sat silent for awhile, thinking furiously, speaking at last, solemnly, from the depths of his conviction.

"And they say she is the peculiar champion of this Englishman. If it be a match, I'll warrant it to be of her planning."

Then he lapsed into silence again and fell to biting his beard, but after a few moments he arose with the air of a man who had made up his mind.

"Ruy," he said, laying his hand upon his friend's shoulder, "don't be distressed. I believe this report to be a mistake. I know her mind better. I am pleased and happy that you have told me all about it at last. I half guessed it once, but afterward thought I had been much mistaken. Don't give way to these useless broodings; you have too much in you to think of despairing; remember

'The clouds are heaviest when they turn to tears;
Night has no terrors Day may not destroy;
Dead is the bloom before the fruit appears;
Sad must the heart be ere it tastes true joy.'

"Think of the poor devil who wrote that—There are better days, Ruy, I am sure of it! I

must leave you now," looking at his watch, "I have an engagement, but I'll see you again, and very soon."

It was not very often that Lubbock had an inspiration, but when he did have one, he lost no time before acting upon it. Meeting him at this moment, enveloped in his long gray ulster, with the high collar turned up, and with very little visible above it, save his round-topped hat, one might not, at first glance, have taken him for an inspired man; but he was that, nevertheless.

Evelyn Weir was reclining half-buried in a thick-cushioned chair, gazing, dreamily, into the fire; her feet resting upon an ottoman of crimson plush. She held a prettily-bound book in her lap, one little thumb, thrust between the leaves, keeping the place where she had been reading. It was Harringford's last romance, and the scene of it was in the mountains, partly. Egotistical, as she argued it to be, and flattering, as she inwardly insisted on thinking it, she saw herself pictured in the pages. Who could say what her thoughts were? Sometimes the sweetest of smiles played an instant about her parted lips.

Sometimes the flickering light of the fire crept under her lashes, sparkling there with unwonted brilliancy, as though a tear had risen.

Who could say? There came a loud ring that startled her a little.

"Would she see Mr. Lubbock for a moment?" "Certainly, she would see Mr. Lubbock."

Perhaps the consciousness of his errand and the image of its performance, not yet performed, did not sit so jauntily on Mr. Lubbock's heart as he could have wished. A number of whirling and spasmodic phantoms seemed to be flitting, with appalling gayety of movement, before his eyes as he entered the large hall, all suffused in the red glow of a hanging-globe light, which globe, as he caught sight of it, made him think of the burning world and the day of judgment. A bachelor, with all a bachelor's timidity, what was it that he had undertaken to do? What was the aunt compared to the niece?

The ulster was already off and hanging on the rack. His hat he had just placed on the peg for the third time. There was no excuse for further delay, and there was Evelyn Weir, herself, smiling at him from the library door. He felt a little shudder run all over him, like a thousand nimble, icy-footed spiders. By a mighty mental effort he went down to his boot-heels after his resolution, and succeeded in dragging it up to his heart, which was by this time leaping frantically about, somewhere near his tie.

He noticed that Miss Weir started a little

when she grasped his hand—and no wonder, it was like frost for coldness; nevertheless, he managed to follow her into the library, making a few commonplace remarks, while the furniture seemed to be leaping about the room like trained leopards in a cage, and the smile which had got itself twisted upon his stiffened features seemed to stick there, as though it were carved out of cold steel and riveted on. It was a dreadful plight to be in. The branch of a tree, blown by the wind, rattled against the window, and instantly his thoughts flew out, as though the sound were some friendly call to them.

How he wished, even now, that he might be the branch of a tree, a dried leaf wheezing in the wind, a cobblestone trampled in the street —anything, so that he might escape being himself. But something must be done. Evelyn was evidently wondering at his long silence.

"Miss Weir," he began solemnly, "I have a communication of some importance to make to you, and I trust——"

Evelyn arose to her feet instantly, pale and trembling, her eyes searching his face, her breast heaving with sudden agitation.

"To me—a communication—is anything—is it serious?"

Merciful Heaven, he thought, this will never do.

"Oh, no, no—not at all—not at all, nothing

in the least serious. Be seated—be seated, my dear child; there is nothing to be frightened about, nothing in the world, I assure you." Strange to say, his courage had all come back. He was master of himself again and, therefore, of the situation.

"Oh, no," he went on, Evelyn having resumed her seat, "what a fool I am to cause you this uneasiness. But before I tell you what I have come for, I suppose it will be entirely in order for me to congratulate you?"

"Congratulate me—you mean on my return home? Thank you. I am truly glad to be here."

"Well, I didn't mean just that," said Lubbock, looking into her eyes; "I meant to congratulate you on your prospective marriage."

"Why, where did you get such an idea?" she said, changing color a little, but looking straight at him with frank, surprised eyes. "I thought you serious, and you are jesting."

"Indeed, I am far from it; on the contrary, your answer is of great moment to me—and to another it is of much greater moment. It is—to be just plain honest, I think—simply a matter of life and death, and it is for that reason, my dear friend, that I am come to you, as a friend in behalf of a friend, though without his knowledge, to ask you kindly to waive the natural reserve you may feel in speaking of this matter

and to tell me, frankly, the truth about this reported engagement between yourself and Mr. Milton."

During this speech Evelyn had turned very pale, but flushed a little at the direct question. Lubbock waited for her answer with very visible anxiety.

"Why, certainly, Mr. Lubbock; after what you tell me, I should think it criminal to jest with you, and I assure you I have no hesitancy in trusting so true a friend as I know you to be. It is true that Mr. Milton has perhaps shown some preference; he has, really, asked my hand in marriage, and my Aunt Delia has been, and is, very zealously, his friend, and very desirous that I should accept him; but—" and a peculiar smile stole over her face and lighted her eyes up with a brilliancy that had something of defiance in its sparkling—"but you know I am of age now, and I advise entirely with myself in such matters. I will be as frank with you as you could wish me. There is no engagement, and there will never be any, between myself and the gentleman you speak of; I am just a little surprised that you could think it."

"But I did not, I did not believe it; I said as much," Lubbock was quick to answer, "and so did Ruy; when I told him, he was——"

The words were out now. Nothing could stop them. They seemed to echo and re-echo

from every corner of the room. Every wire in the piano seemed to be repeating them over and over. Evelyn was blushing painfully.

Evidently he was in for it now, and it is but simple justice to say that he arose to the demands of the occasion. He just confessed that he had taken it upon himself to come and speak in behalf of his friend. He had, he said, just found out the truth at last and felt bound to speak and to speak at once, and so, while Evelyn sat holding her book before her face to screen the fire-light from it, he went on, telling her in glowing words the story of Harringford's unselfish love for her through all the years; how respect for her sorrow had sealed his lips; how he had striven to forget and could not; how he had followed his task, through the dark days and years, with her image for his inspiration. He spoke of his griefs, his hopeless devotion, and of the despair which he believed would end his life. The love in his own warm heart for his friend urged his thoughts into words, lent fire to his brain and eloquence to his tongue. He forgot himself in the earnestness with which he told the history of his friend's unhappy affection.

"I do not know," he said in conclusion, "whether I shall get forgiveness from either of you; I shall hope for it—I had no choice—I could not rest after I knew the truth, and now

that you know it my heart is lighter. I would have you remember, always," he continued, rising to go, "that I am your devoted friend, and if you ever need my service, at any time, you have only to command me."

Evelyn had not removed the book from before her face during his entire speech, throughout which she had remained in silence, and as she arose now, she still held it so as to shield her face from his eyes. She did not wish him to know that her cheeks were wet with tears; but she held out her hand, for good-night, saying that he need not wait longer than now for her forgiveness, and that she should always think of him as a friend on whom she could call at any time.

So Lubbock departed, and only noticed how perfectly self-possessed and calm he really was, when he found himself, half-way along the square, with his ulster safe under one arm and his hat still in his hand.

No one was near to see, however, and he got them both on in less time than it takes to tell it. He walked on, with a certain jauntiness of step, inwardly congratulating himself on his own performance, intending to go straight to Harringford. But little by little the flush of his success began to cool upon him, and before he had gone many blocks on his way, the self-congratulatory accent had died entirely out of the lively little air he had been softly whistling, and he began

to wonder if he had really any just cause for the dim suspicion, now crossing his mind at shorter and shorter intervals, that there was just a bare possibility of his having played the fool; and with that thought the cold spiders were busy with him again. He stopped near the turning of a street to think. He felt a growing conviction that a little time for serious meditation was what he needed most just now. Harringford seemed, more and more, a dangerous sort of man to meet.

This was a new business with him. For the first time in his life he was brought to a standstill by a moral hurdle which he did not know how to climb, and he dared not attempt to jump it, and so he simply stood, and looked. One part of his mind made careful note of the manner in which the bricks were placed about the roots of a tree which sprang out of the pavement just in front of him, and another part was sailing out over the fields, it seemed, seeking about, in thickets and other unfrequented spots, for a possible place of safety; while still another faculty was busy picturing Evelyn Weir and her probable state of mind. Why did he not wait for her to say something, to give some kind of expression to what she must have been thinking. He thought of returning to her; but no, that would not do now. Evidently he had played the fool. There was but little doubt in

his mind about that now. Just then a policeman, following his long shadow, came past the corner on his rounds. He glanced at Lubbock, standing there like a stork in a trance. Lubbock turned and began retracing his steps, feeling the policeman's eyes boring through the back of his ulster; pursued by a vague consciousness that he was perhaps a fit subject for arrest. His own room seemed now the proper asylum for a man who was fast becoming a lunatic, and thither he betook himself, to think it all over and then to change his position uneasily, and still to think it all over.

Harringford was far from happy; for though he was ready to grasp at any straw, he was able to glean but little comfort from Lubbock's assurances. After Lubbock's departure he had tried to lose himself in a book and so escape his vexing thought; but it was useless. He only read with his eyes, while his mind wandered away from the page continually. He threw the book aside, and opening the tablet in which he had been writing, tried to force his thoughts into the artificial channel of composition, but the voice within his heart would not be hushed; it was in vain to try, and after an hour's sad luxury of thinking, which was also fruitless, he arose and went out to walk. The night had turned mild. The sky was misty and a strong wind was blowing from the south.

It was something just to be stirring. There was a certain sense of pleasure in the mere assertion of physical power—for he was a man of splendid mould and make, and his bodily strength, his wonderful animal excellence, seemed still to defy the blighting touch of sorrow.

Mile after mile he sped along the deserted streets, stemming the sudden gusts that swept past, whirling the withered leaves against him and making the flames in the gas-lamps flare and roar again. It was late when he came in, at last, resenting inwardly this lonely returning home; but feeling withal a sense of freshness and renewed strength for the steady battle which can only end with death. He was halfway up the dark stairway when he heard a cry that made him stop and listen.

The cry was startlingly human-like, and seemed to come from some of the empty rooms below. In a moment it died away into a wretched moaning, which was followed by a scratching noise that puzzled him no little. After waiting for some time—the sounds not being repeated—he went up to his room, leaving the door open a little way, so that he might hear, and drawing his chair in front of the fire, sat down, intending to listen. He recalled what Ainsworth had often said about the strange noises he had heard in the old house and for which he had never

been able to account. "I wish I could find something," he thought to himself. But the quiet still continuing, his thoughts wandered off to other things, and he was at last drifting into unconsciousness when he was startled by the same cry, only it sounded much louder, and heart-rending beyond belief. It was not one cry only, but a quick succession of wails, and as the lugubrious notes swelled and echoed through the hollow rooms, he sprang to his feet, inwardly protesting, with a kind of mental desperation, against the horrible cachination, which, by its dreadful insistency, awakened a sympathetic anguish in his own breast.

"What can it be?" he thought, striding out into the hallway. The cries had died down now into low moanings, and as he listened, intently, leaning over the balustrade, he could hear again the scratching noise. His mind ran quickly over the possibilities. He had been away for more than a week. Surely no human being was in the house; it must be a dog; the cry might be made by either in great distress—but how could a dog have effected an entrance? Then he remembered how they had found the front door open on the night of their departure, and the sounds like light, swift footsteps on the floor of the hall, the softly-closed door—it seemed plain enough; it must be a dog. He went back into his room and took up the lamp, but put it

down again and stood thinking a moment; then he went into his sleeping-room and came back with a candle. Cutting this in two, he put one-half into a heavy brazen candlestick—an old one he had been keeping for ornament on his mantel. Lighting this hurriedly, he went out and along the hallway, down the back staircase and into the lower hall. He was making his way toward the rear of the house and was passing a small door which opened in, under the stairway, when he heard suppressed sounds that evidently came from the cellar.

The door stood an inch or two ajar. For, though it was made to close by means of a spring, the contrivance was so weakened by rust and long use that the door always swung open a little, leaving a small crevice. Holding his hand, as a guard, about the flame of the candle to keep the draught from extinguishing it, Harringford now pushed this door open with his shoulder, pausing a moment on the little platform inside, to let it shut softly behind him, and then, holding the light a little above his head, he went slowly but steadily down the dingy flight of steps. Several bloated and speckled spiders ran quickly out on their webs to stare at the passing flame, and as quickly retreated again into their funnel-like lairs, leaving all the outspread filmy fabric quivering behind them.

Damp stains glittered here and there upon

the walls, and the air was filled with musty odors. In the spaces between some rotting boards which lay upon the ground, groups of fungi had sprung up in dismal little groves, looking like diminutive pale umbrellas. There were slight scuttling sounds, made by the rats as they fled in sudden consternation, and one bold, gray-haired old fellow Harringford saw watching him from the mouth of his retreat, his black eyes gleaming with baleful but speaking intelligence.

Glancing sharply about him, Harringford made his way along the broad, gloomy passage, into the divisions of the cellar which lay under the forward portion of the house. He had never been here since the time when they had made search for Ainsworth, fearful of what each look might disclose. Half-remembered objects, long stored away in these regions, now seemed to come forth from the uncertain shadows toward the flickering light. There was no lack of fantastic and frightful suggestions for an imaginative mind, but his fancies only brought, now, a half-smile to Harringford's face as he surveyed the grotesque, inanimate things, whose only crime was in the bulky proportions of their uselessness; a kind of ponderous effrontery, in thus persisting to be, after their days of service were at an end.

He retraced his steps along the passage.

There was one more apartment which he now prepared to enter, snuffing his candle and spreading the wick, to improve the flame. A wide, square, unusual-looking opening in the wall, just opposite the steps, led into it, and crouching down, with the light thrust out ahead of him, Harringford went in, glaring about him with expectant eyes. At one end of the place the rough stone foundation of a chimney jutted out, and in the angle which it formed with the wall a few boards stood leaning, and against these a great heap of rubbish had been thrown.

Harringford remembered it all well enough. The packing out of numerous boxes—received by Ainsworth—together with all sorts of nondescript litter, had been scattered about the cellar, and he himself had ordered the servant to clear the place up. The boards in the corner also had probably been placed there by Ainsworth himself, and Harringford remembered now having moved them, glancing, aimlessly, behind them, at the time Lubbock and himself were hopelessly looking about the cellars for some sign. It was on this heap of rubbish that he now fixed his eyes, advancing with the light in his right hand, held above his head and shading his eyes with his left. The thick darkness seemed to resist the feeble rays. He took a step or two nearer; there was a sudden stirring on the heap of rubbish. He stopped, looking

intently toward the spot. He now saw that the rubbish had been recently disturbed. It had been pulled away from the wall and partly scattered about. Some of the decaying boards had been thrown down, and as the light fell now on the others, he saw that they were freshly marked with deep scratches.

A thrill of conviction ran through him, feeling himself upon the eve of a discovery. Still he could make out nothing distinctly amidst the the rubbish, which was flattened and hollowed out, like the lair of some wild beast. With a feeling of half-angry impatience, he took another step forward—there came a low, threatening growl—he raised the candle aloft and bent nearer, shading his eyes. Slowly, a grizzled, shapeless head was lifted, and two eyes, that glowed, like balls of fire, from their hollow sockets, glared at him over the edge of that wretched abode in which their owner—whatever it might be—had taken shelter.

"Come, poor fellow," said Harringford, his voice just a little unsteady.

Instantly there was a shuddering movement within the lair, and a grayish, wrinkled, leathery, speckled, skeleton-like thing, half-human, half-animal seeming, clambered and slid down over the intervening obstacles, and, with horrible, phantom-like movements, with suppressed chatterings and human-like whimperings, the creat-

ure came, swiftly, scrambling and crawling amidst the moving wisps of straw and débris, straight toward him; but in that uncertain light Harringford could make out nothing, and for the moment his senses were utterly confused. With an involuntary convulsive movement of his arm, he brought the candle down through the air with a lightning-like movement that extinguished it. The thick darkness seemed to leap against him. Dashing the candle-stick to the ground, with an exclamation of anger, he reached wildly down through the gloom and grappled the animal fiercely with both his hands. He could feel the ribs, plainly, as his fingers gathered the thick hairy skin in their frantic grasp.

For the instant his actions were obedient only to the unreasoning instincts of self-preservation, but in the next, he was master of himself again. There was a sharp cry, followed by a half-savage, half-conciliatory growl, interrupted by hurried and noisy mastication. The poor brute was ravenously devouring something. Harringford's touch convinced him of the truth at once. It was a huge dog, shut in and starving to death. "By Jove," he thought, "he's making the most of his opportunity; he has done for my piece of candle already." He smiled, inwardly, thinking of his predicament, at the same time loosing his hold and patting

the beast gently; but his friendly action was answered by a fierce warning, and he could easily imagine the heavy lip curling and curving back from the white, dangerous fangs. What if the dog, driven mad by his hunger, was about to attack him there, in the dark? Nervously he began feeling about on the ground for the heavy candlestick, but he could not find it. He stepped quickly backward, feeling with one hand for the wall behind him, while with the other he searched in his pockets for a match. In a moment he was against the wall. He could hear the beast moving toward him—there was not much time. The match was found at last; but he struck it too roughly, in his hurry, and the brimstone fell, with feeble sputterings, to the ground.

Quickly procuring another, Harringford forced enough composure to strike it carefully on one of the stones behind him. The friendly light relieved his mind at once. The wretched beast was some distance from him, making weak but frantic endeavors to gather in the fragments of the candle, which had escaped his first well-intended efforts.

"Poor devil," thought Harringford, "what a time he has had of it here; he is too weak to hurt anything."

Looking about him he soon found a splinter of resinous-looking pine, which he lighted with a match.

"A little fire and brimstone, even, is not a bad thing to mingle with outer darkness—at the proper time and place," he thought to himself, coming closer to the dog, who now, despite his fear of the light, wagged his tail feebly, in friendly recognition.

Harringford remembered the animal well enough now. He had seen him often, prowling about the place, and had fed him more than once. He stood a moment, regarding the poor brute, sympathizingly noting the long attenuated speckled body, the slender pitiful neck, which now seemed unable to support the top-heavy head with its dome-like, Gothic shape; the long ears which hung pendant, flanking the lugubrious countenance, and the great, mournful, steadfast eyes, that glared with startling intelligence and almost human expressiveness.

"My grave and reverent senior," Harringford said, addressing him, "I cannot leave you here to howl the night out in your loneliness and misery. Come, my poor fellow-creature—" laying a gentle hand on the head that was turned appealingly toward him with whimperings of self-commiseration—"we must make shift to get out of this." And suiting the action to the words he lifted the ungainly beast under his right arm and carried him so—dangling helplessly, with a ridiculous expression of resignation on his long face—up to his room.

Although the hour was late, Harringford managed to procure something for him to eat, and having made him as comfortable as he could with the help of an old rug, he had the satisfaction to note that the patient brute did not seem to share in his own misgivings about the possible effect of so hearty a meal after so long a fast; but rather settled himself to rest with a confident resignation and an indifference to the future worthy of a Greek philosopher—which, indeed, perhaps he was.

But, Greek or no Greek, or however madly the canine phantoms may have revelled amid the disturbed visions of his slumbers, the dog was infinitely more at ease in his spirit than was John Lubbock—at the same moment—tossing and turning upon his bed. He was like the Psalmist of old—" the visions of his bed troubled him." What was it that he had done? He had heard somewhere—or had he read it—or had it originated in his own mind? Anyway, he remembered the words as though they had occurred among the commandments: "Follow, unhesitatingly, an impulse that your conscience tells you is a good one." Well, that was just what he had done—and yet—he could not sleep. What would Ruy think when he found it out—and of course he would find it out—what would he say?

And Evelyn—what was she thinking at that

moment? "Pleased or displeased," he thought, remembering the old game.

He could not tell, she might be either—happy or distressed. Of course, she said she forgave him, but her goodness of heart, her good breeding, would prompt that much. He was all at sea. It seemed an awful thing, this, and at his time of life. It is a queer thing, this protesting of maturity against the ills which it complacently looks upon as the right and proper visitations of youth and inexperience, yet it was this very spirit of protest, strong within him, that now caused him to rise from his dim bed for perhaps the twentieth time, like a very substantial ghost, and to roam about the room in search of his pipe that he might sit before the fire, industriously mingling smoke and meditation in hope of comfort.

There is, at times, a good deal of consolation in a good meerschaum, for a man who has nothing better, but for the most part Misery is a wary visitor, and is not so easily turned out of doors. At all events, the immortal weed had lost its flavor now, and there was nothing for it but to crawl back to his bed, which stood there upon its four stolid legs, doggedly awaiting him, with that sinister vigilance which seems to be, at times, a peculiarly exasperating quality of certain inanimate objects, that by reason of their uses, have gained a close acquaintanceship

with humanity. Nothing for it but to toss on through the black sea of night until he could set foot once more upon the pallid shores of morning, trusting that with the rising sun some inspiration might come to light him out of the mental and moral quagmire into which he had deliberately walked—nay, had forced his way in, as though it were a state to be desired.

If Harringford should ever find out all that he had said, and once conceived a thought as to the possibility of his having been made an object of pity in Evelyn's eyes—he would never forget it. Lubbock was sure of that. And Evelyn! Even now he imagined himself pictured in that lady's mind—a brilliant idiot, blinded by his own feelings and undertaking to control elements with which he was about as fitted to cope as a baby to play with lightning; with a good heart enough, but with absolutely no adequate conception of what was due to his friends or of the common proprieties of social life. No tact, no judgment, no anything. The web of his thoughts seemed to wrap him as in a poisoned garment. He felt himself scorching as with a fever. Social proprieties! How little they had weighed with him that night, with his heart filled only with love for his friend and the one desire —to help him—to save him, to bring him good; he had forgotten all else for that, and now—well, he was anything but satisfied with himself.

Some way, the reward of conscience seemed to have missed *him.*

But John Lubbock is not the only man who has found nothing but bitterness in doing what seemed the right thing to do. Not only what *seems,* but what *is,* the right. Yet he had been wise, nevertheless. There is only one rock upon which to stand—the right—because it is right, reward or *no* reward. If we do right that we may be blessed, rewarded, we are, after all, only hirelings. A man's own heart must decide for him, not that superficial fool called "the *world,*" which has no heart.

Harringford was late to breakfast the next morning. Lubbock had already been gone some time. They were not to wait for him: they were not to be surprised if he did not come to meals. Some matters of importance would be likely to keep him away for a day or two, his sister explained.

"Yes," said Harringford, "he spoke last night of an engagement somewhere."

But Harringford was rather disappointed, for he wished to speak with Lubbock particularly. After luncheon he went to Lubbock's office to look him up, but he was not there, and Harringford, moody and depressed, returning to his room, walking slowly, without umbrella, through the drizzling rain, wandered from his way, absorbed in thought; musing dejectedly over the memo-

ries suggested to him by the odor of the wet leaves which hung heavy on the weeping trees, or lay, covering the pavements with matchless designs in gold and green and crimson, mingled with brown and gray; so beautiful in color, so exquisite in workmanship, that it seemed like sacrilege to tread them under foot. More than once Harringford stooped to pick up some brilliant waif, whose perfect outline and delicious coloring appealed to him so that he could not pass it. At each of these he would look wistfully for a moment and then thrust it forgetfully into his overcoat pocket. They were like old-time friends, recognized again, for a moment, amidst the tragic revelries of Nature—stopping to whisper a message only, and then whirling on.

But the messages, repeated over and over, were not without effect. Harringford began to think of the great silent hills somewhere—what matter where—far-off, away, out of this vexed world. The peaceful solitudes

> Where Tyrian-tinted woodlands cast away
> Their wine-stained, costly glories one by one;
> Where wild, fantastic madness and decay
> Blend into strange sad silence, like the play
> Of noiseless phantoms in some world undone.

There he would go, to live out his days, alone, to pray—not for happiness, now, that was past,

but only for peace. "My peace I give unto you, not as the world giveth." His mind dwelt tenderly, caressingly, on the words of the Master. Might he not find peace, also, at last? He would labor still, too, for the good and uplifting of his fellow-man, in some way. They would not thank him—well, no matter. That thought weighed but little. His idol was broken. The inspiring angel of his life had turned away—well, perhaps he had been too fond of ideals, had over-estimated the value of things, of life itself, even, had overrated himself and his own abilities. The realities in the midst of which he found himself failed to justify the high notions he had entertained. What, then—there must be another life. A life where peace and self-forgetfulness may be purchased by the sacrifice of ambition and worldly preference. He would go to seek that life. He would go at once. To-morrow should find him on his way. To-morrow! thou vantage-ground of hope and aspiration, for which life and death are battling continually. To-morrow! what would we do without our *To-morrow.*

Harringford had reached now a more busy portion of the city. Once he thought he had a glimpse of John Lubbock in the crowd, but he lost him again. Just then a carriage came by. Behind the glass door a fair image seemed inclining toward him. He turned, and looked

after the retreating vehicle with all his eyes, lifting his hat and speaking an audible greeting, although blushingly conscious that it could not be heard except by those for whom it was not intended. The carriage did not stop, and was soon out of sight amid the moving wilderness of the street. How pale she appeared and what a look she gave him. There was something in that look—what was it—that appealed to him as nothing in the world had ever done before. He could not understand it. He could not even try. His very soul had gone out to meet that look. How quick is a lover's eye! how knowing; how wise is a lover's heart! which makes it the more sad that the lover himself is, so often, such a fool. He stood on the curb looking after her—"HER." Hope, happiness, love, sorrow—the realm of all tender thought, all dreams that had ever visited his mind or quickened his heart—the world, life itself, all, were wrapped up in that one word. A sudden wild, unreasonable longing sprang up in his soul, something which that look had inspired in him and which he could no more resist or set aside than he could reverse the law of his being. He *must* find her—he *would* find her—and when he did, he would *speak*. Wherever they should meet, be it where it might—coming down the steps of some friend's house, stepping from the door of her carriage, in the rain upon the glit-

tering pavement, amidst the jostlings of the crowd, no matter—he would find time and place —*nothing* should prevent him.

If words could be made to obey the heart's intent, he would know, he would be assured. Already he was making his way steadily back along the street, keeping close to the edge of the pavement so that he might watch the better.

Could anything have seemed more absolutely hopeless, more utterly devoid of the old world's good common sense? Philosophy, resolutions, dreams of lonely and quiet life, self-forgetful labors for the good of mankind, where were they now? All vanished. Vanished, because of a woman's glance. Oh, divine madness of love! whoever hath never felt thy touch hath never lived. Thou only recompense for this long death which we honor with the name of life; thou only heaven-filled cup, to cheer the barren feast at which we sit, smiling our foolish smiles, until the host shall please to help us to a grave.

After hurrying along the distance of two or three blocks, Harringford stopped again and stood on the curb, looking across the dismal street. The smoke swept leisurely against the dripping faces of the soot-stained buildings. The shrill whistle of the street-car driver sounded an impatient warning to the heavy iron wagon, failing to cause any acceleration, how-

ever, in its sullen, sidelong retreat from the track. Light vehicles whirled by, disdaining the slow world which moved on doggedly through the mud. Carriages, surmounted by pyramidal figures in glistening rubber, stood waiting in front of the stores, in which the gas was lighted, for the day was unusually dark. A vender of nuts and fruits, near by, bawled out, from time to time, a lugubrious warning to the passers-by that now was the time to procure the one thing for suffering humanity.

It was the onward flowing of the steady stream. The usual, unpoetic, dead-level commonplace stream of rainy-day human existence in a city. Perhaps no spectacle is so uninviting, so perfectly tinted over with a well-mixed and a well-studied tone of misery, or so admirably calculated to induce a sense of utter wretchedness in the beholder. And yet, Ruy Harringford stood gazing across the scene like one enchanted. Often he was rudely jostled and was obliged to make violent efforts to keep from stepping into the swimming gutter.

The wind had grown colder and the slanting rain struck sharply against his face, and his clothes were growing heavy upon him. His restless eyes were glowing. His face was pale, but beautified from the rapt expression by which the uplifted spirit announced its superiority to all material things. He fumbled the

damp leaves in his pocket with cold fingers, and a sharp pain now and then flitted across his brows. Curious glances were bestowed upon him by the passers, accompanied by smiles, at times, that might mean anything—or nothing. There are few faces that show any meaning in a smile, after maturity. The genuine smile pertains, for the most part, only to childhood. The shabbily dressed and rather youthful-looking fruit-vender, however, seated under his flimsy and dilapidated oil-cloth shelter, the tatters of which sported playfully in the wind, was doing a bit of genuine, unconventional staring, through a pair of large, black, unabashed eyes, which were turned toward Harringford very frequently, with looks denoting very natural wonderment and unmistakable and growing interest.

But Harringford was oblivious. I suppose the great world, judging from outward appearances, would have set him down in its mind an amplified fool, and, it may be, that a full knowledge of the feelings which possessed him would only have strengthened that opinion. Well, it is, perhaps, a dangerous luxury to differ, sharply, with the great world; haply it is an injudicious thing to do, and yet Harringford was, at that moment, a very wise man. Wise, with a wisdom that is not in the books. Wise in the wisdom of Nature, beside which the wisdom of Solomon

is but a poor thing; before which the gravest philosopher or stoic is as a child, merely, full of unmeaning babblings. We can afford to leave him for a little while, even as he stands: bereft as he seems to be of all the kindly ministrations in which the worldling feels himself most blest and happy.

After John Lubbock had left her, Evelyn Weir sat thinking, until a late hour. She was, perhaps, as much disturbed as he, but not, we are glad to believe, quite so unhappy.

The still air of the quiet room seemed ringing with a soundless reverberation of the words he had spoken. She could hear them all over again, or was it that she could see them? For that is the way words seem to repeat themselves to us at times—we seem to see them written on the air. It is almost as though we might touch them; so that one is often constrained to believe in a sixth sense which combines in itself all the qualities existing separately in the other five.

At all events, she sat, thinking and thinking and thinking, as we all do at times; not because we can reach any definite conclusion, not because we expect to, even, but simply because it turns out that the mind will not rest when once thoroughly aroused, until it has exhausted itself by this strange, and in most cases, fruitless,

labor which we call *thinking;* even though the mind should realize clearly, in the beginning, that the labor will be vain. Our thoughts seem to travel on over the tortuous track, until they either stop, as against a solid wall, or get bewildered and lost in some shifting labyrinth where consciousness, itself, fades amid the fleeting shadows. Then they return, to go eagerly and carefully over the same road again, with no apparent loss of interest in every crook and turn of the way: although they must inevitably bring up at the same unsatisfying goal; and thus they will go, and keep us waiting the while, over and over and over, until their steps grow slower and slower and the patient feet, clogged and retarded by sheer weight of weariness, are brought to a stop at last and the strange, mysterious, silent spirit of life within, slowly folds her wings and we are at rest—at rest, but only when we cannot know it—asleep. With the first dawn of consciousness the noiseless, nimble feet are busy again: and so they go, indenting with the ebb and flow of the waves, like the birds one may see at the ocean beach, ever close upon the verge along the whispering shore—the birds along the shore of the ocean; our thoughts along the shore of life.

Stretching out, far beyond this undefined shore, lies the great sea. Some time all our thoughts will blend with the ebbing wave and

then—then, it must be, they will be at rest forever.

"He has loved me always, and he loves me now."

Like a refrain these words repeated themselves in Evelyn's heart when she awoke, late, the next morning. She could hear the subdued music of the rain as it softly struck a million gentle notes upon the leaves of the glorious maple outside, which was showering its golden gifts upon the fresh green lawn and weeping, the while, a flood of crystal tears.

I cannot say that Evelyn was happy, and yet why not? For happiness is, after all, but a figure of speech. She arose, dressed, had breakfast, and sat down to read—the usual, every-day routine; and yet, to-day, there was more in all these things than had been in them yesterday. I know not if it be happiness, but it is something which, when we have it, makes us pity ourselves in the days when we did not have it; makes us kindlier, gentler to others who, we imagine, do not know the strange joy which makes the darkest day bright for us, the meanest prospect lovely. We are so rich that we feel we *must* owe *something* to everybody. Certainly, Evelyn had never looked so beautiful. There was a caress in every glance of her eyes. Nothing was commonplace. A celestial grace accompanied her every movement. Her heart

overflowed with pure and thankful emotions, like a cup gently shaken when it is brimming with precious wine. The world is new with every day. It is because our hearts are burdened with the memories of the past, that we grow old; but for this, we too would renew our lives each day, and, like the earth, be young and full of hope forever.

In the afternoon Evelyn was sitting by the window in the library—her own, it was now—the window where she used to sit, listening to her father's readings, while the redbreasts hopped about on the lawn, glancing up curiously at her, standing so still, sometimes with such seeming attentiveness to what was said that she half-believed they understood it all, perfectly. Even now, as she sat looking out, she saw the very same robins—so they seemed—so like they were, and they glanced up, too, as though they remembered her well enough, standing very trim and straight on their slender legs, their breasts all dabbled from the wet grass.

"And I am a woman now," she was thinking; "and this is life that I am living, and what am I making of it? What am I really doing, for myself or for any one?"

Vainly she tried to realize, to herself, what she must actually appear and be, in unmerciful truth. It is a hard thing for any one to do.

This day must bring something! Something she would do! Some good deed performed, some kindly action done, should be hers to remember, before darkness closed again over the world.

Slowly her eyes came back to the book which lay upon her lap. It was the romance she had been reading the night before, and now she had finished it, and saw herself pictured by a loving hand; she was pleased but saddened by it. It seemed to her she was drawn as she ought to be, not as she was. And why should she not be like that? Was it impossible to be in one's own person the actual embodiment of such an ideal? The last few pages had awakened in her a strange longing, and she now went over them again, trying to catch the full spirit of them. There was something ineffably sad in them, though she could not just fix it. It seemed to her a strange piece of writing, and the book ended with a few lines which might have appealed to her but slightly if taken by themselves, but placed as they were, at the close of the romance she had just read, they seemed, now, full of meaning. Again she read them over:

Good-by, good-by, life is one long farewell.
Farewell! Why do I vainly seek to keep
The joys that would be flitting? None will dwell
For long in my poor house; but I'll not weep,

Nor bid ye tarry. See! the world outside
  Hath better, far, to offer. Go—go—go!
Quick, lest I waver, lest my tearful pride
  Melt into weakness, and I, bending low,
Beseech ye to remain! Ye shall not say
I prayed, and all in vain, that ye should stay!

I would my house were better, and God knows
  I sought to make it so; I sought with tears
Through summer's heat and in the winter snows
  To build it other than it now appears;
And why I failed I know not. Fain, oh fain,
  Would I have entertained ye with the best,
If that were mine to give, but all is vain;
  My house is no fit lodge for heavenly guest!
Joys lightly go, despite our tenderest care,
But Sorrow stays, content with scantiest fare.

Musing, she let the book sink softly on her knee.

"He loved me always, and he loves me now."

Her thoughts had caught the trick of the measure again and her mind dwelt on this verse of hers with a kind of miser delight. And so she sat, lost in a revery, her hands clasped, her head bent forward. A fair picture she was, against the gray light of the window; like some of the wonderful pictures men painted of old—when they painted not for gold but for love.

There came a ceremonious little knock at the door which she did not hear, but it was no matter, apparently, for the door was opened softly and two ladies in black entered. Evelyn

still not looking up, the stately Aunt Delia thought proper to announce her presence by a shrill little cough, which was quite a formidable little herald—quite characteristic and intensely feminine.

The other lady was the good Aunt Evelyn, the sister of Evelyn's father, "with whom she lived," as Evelyn expressed it, though the house and all that belonged to it, were her own. A gentle and motherly woman was this Aunt Evelyn, and quite subdued-looking compared with the trenchant Delia, the unwinking chaperone, with whom we have already some slight acquaintance.

Aunt Evelyn seated herself quietly, after the manner of mild persons who are conscious of growing weight and, perhaps, a little dulness, and Miss Delia also settled into a deep chair, with certain flutterings and starchy rustlings which seemed natural and necessary accompaniments of her make-up.

"Ahem! my dear," she said, "we've been having *such* a talk—sister and I—about—ah—Mr. Milton. I think Mr. Milton is *such* a *nice* man."

Evelyn placed her book endwise on her lap, and leaning her elbow on it, rested her chin in her hand; pushing herself back further in her chair, with a slight movement of impatience.

"About—ahem—Mr. Milton. We—that is,

sister and I—really think you ought to reconsider, my dear, considering everything—ahem. He sent me a note yesterday; such a beautiful, *such* a beautifully written note—" bringing forth, at the same time, the crisp and scented witness from her convenient pocket—"*such* a nice note, asking me to speak with you. It really seems to me cruel in you not to reconsider. He is obliged to leave to-night, you know, and he wishes to call this afternoon. How beautifully it is worded." Reading: "'Every hope I have depends on her decision. She is an angel who has troubled the waters of my life. Without her, my existence is as nothing. With her, the world would be, to me, a paradise.' Now, isn't it, my dear? Really, I don't see why you shouldn't think of it again. Mr. Milton is so nice and so different—and you—you——"

"I am so indifferent. Yes, Aunt, I fear that is it. I fear it will have to be another Mr. Milton's paradise lost; angels are really so scarce, you know; outside of books, and——"

"Well, I am sure, if I—I am sure I don't see how you can make a jest of it when he is so serious, and—he is so superior—so nice, and so —so—different."

"Yes, I know, Auntie, dear, and I am rather nice and superior about some things myself, too, don't you think?" Evelyn said, rising and laying her book upon a table. "And now I am

going to be serious, too—very serious. Do you know—have you ever thought, what it is you are urging me to do, exactly? You are using all your wits to have me marry a man I do not love. I do not know what it is, precisely, that in your mind justifies marriage and makes it honorable, but I can assure you, my own ideas of that relation are very clear and absolute.

"I would not choose to marry a moral and mental entity, made up of admirable qualities; to bind myself, by sacred vows, to an institution for which I might have the profoundest respect and esteem, but nothing more. If ever I should marry at all, I should wish to marry a man that I loved, and you—that are so punctual and persistent concerning the forms of religion—you counsel me to hush every appeal of conscience and, kneeling before the holy altar, promise, in the presence of God and men, to love, honor, and obey, when I could not do any one of the three. You would have me turn a sacrament into a farce, invoking God's blessing with a falsehood on my lips, and then rise to receive the congratulations of my friends. Such a marriage is a mockery of every teaching of Christ and an insult to Nature. Any form, however proper in itself, may enclose as much evil as good. Am I serious enough? I trust not *too* serious, dear Aunt. I wish only to make myself clearly understood. If I think at all, I must

think for myself, and in a matter of this kind, surely, I must choose for myself. I could never marry where I do not love. I do not know if it be always safest, happiest, but it must be best, for I know it is right." She struck sharply on the bell which stood upon the table. There was a moment's silence. "See that the carriage is ready, directly," she said, when the servant appeared.

"What! you are not going out—you will at least see him when he calls?" said Miss Delia, rising.

"Why, yes, Aunt, I am going out; but—" she said, smiling, and taking her aunt's hand in hers with true tenderness—"if he calls, you give him my final answer; won't you, please? It is the same—No, with thanks. You can make it sound better some way, you have such a command of language, you know, Auntie dear, and it is my wish that it should be beautifully worded, like the note. You will, won't you? That is a dear. I am obliged to go; I must do some good before the day is over, and he would much rather hear you say it than to hear me; and then, Auntie dear, you know he is so—different." And she kissed her.

"Well, I am sure—well—I—will." Aunt Delia was just a little bewildered and withdrew herself under cover of a safe and entirely satisfactory cloud of unmeaning graciousness.

"I know I am right," Evelyn said, softly, to herself, when she was gone.

"Yes, dearie," said the quiet Aunt Evelyn, rising and coming close to Evelyn. "Yes, dearie, you are always right." She had a darling boy, who was sleeping among the indistinguishable dead under the sod, somewhere on the field at Gettysburg, and the way Evelyn's head was set upon her shoulders, recalled him painfully. She caught the girl to her breast and kissed her again and again while the tears coursed down her plain and patient face. "Isn't it a bad day, dearie, for you to be driving?" she said, at length, drying her eyes.

"Well, yes, it is; but I don't mind the rain," Evelyn said, patting her gently on the shoulder. "I have felt all day that I must accomplish some good, for some one, before night comes. I will go to see Nora Dale, she has a charity school—besides, I know some people I wish to look after, and I must be stirring; I have but an hour or two until dinner. Good-by, Auntie dear. You will always love me?"

"Always, my dear child, always," said the good Aunt Evelyn, kissing her tenderly.

In a little while Evelyn was being whirled along the wet streets in her carriage, her thoughts keeping pace with the flying wheels. She was conscious of a keen exhilaration. She saw her poor people, making half a dozen of

them supremely happy, had a talk with her friend, Nora Dale, and was on her way to execute an errand for Aunt Evelyn. She glanced continually out of the window. Suddenly she saw Harringford looking very disconsolate in the rain. Her heart began to throb violently. He was not looking. She thought of asking the driver to stop. Just then she saw Harringford look toward her and knew she was recognized. She saw his lips moving as he raised his hat. She longed to stop the carriage, but in the confusion of her mind she hesitated, and in an instant he was lost from sight. Why did he not motion her to stop—why could she not just stop and speak to him? and yet it seemed she could not. She felt, in some way, defrauded, disappointed, unhappy. She sat looking straight in front of her. Her cheeks were very pale and her thoughts were very busy; her hands were trembling, too, and the tears were very, very near her eyes. If he had known that now! The commission—the errand she was to do?—she had forgotten! Where were they? She hadn't the slightest idea! Daniel must have mistaken her direction; they must be far past the place! And so they were. At last Evelyn explained to the wet and shining gum-coated sphinx outside, which made answer: "I done stopped dah, Miss Evlyn, 'deed I is, en yo' say, 'Go on, nev' mine.' Yessum, I

knows whar 'tis, mighty well. I git yo' dah agin. Yessum, 'deed yo' say, 'Go on, nev' mine.'"

"I wonder if I did," she thought to herself as they retraced their way; "I must be losing my mind."

The store was reached at last, however, and the sphinx descended to ward off the drip with an umbrella as she stepped out, under the awning.

"Now, Daniel, drive to the book-store and get whatever there is there for me and come back here."

"Yessum." And once more the dripping figure seemed to become a part of the vehicle. "Miss Evelyn's mighty cuyus to-day, looks like," he murmured to himself as he drove away. "We was right dah wen we tu'n 'roun,' en she didn't say nothin' 'bout stop'n' dah twell wese plumb back hyar ag'in. She mus' be studyin' 'bout sump'n' sure."

"Everybody must wait for a wet day to go shopping," thought Evelyn, as she looked about her in the crowded store. But she was in no great hurry; besides, she wanted a little time to muster her courage for what she had to do.

"This is the counter, I think," she said to herself, moving toward a group of ladies who were keeping up an animated discussion over the

latest styles and their relative merits. A pale-faced, delicate-looking man, who had been waiting upon them, had, just then, been forced to retire because of a fit of coughing, and Evelyn just got a glimpse of his face as he motioned to one of his fellow-clerks to take his place, the veins in his neck and forehead swollen painfully by the paroxysms which rendered speech impossible.

"Mr. Truesdale's — is this Mr. Truesdale's counter?" she asked, as one of the young men leaned affably toward her.

"Mr. Truesdale's—yes—I'll bring him in a moment," the young man said, gasping desperately between his words and blushing to the roots of his hair as he retired, his heart fluttering like a bird in a snare. Alas, what power to wound or bless, belongs to beauty! Evelyn had not been in that store very often; perhaps she might have remembered having seen that young man—perhaps—and yet, he worshipped her—worshipped as the moss-star worships the rose; treasuring up the remembrances of her unconscious glances as the brook clasps its little fragments of the far-off sky.

Evelyn felt a little tremulous and uncertain, as she tried to formulate in her mind what she wished to say to Mr. Truesdale. It was only a moment until he stood before her, bowing, a patient smile on his pale face, and the tears

caused by his spell of coughing still glistening in his eyes. Evelyn reached over and shook hands with him, cordially.

"I called to see Mrs. Truesdale to-day," she said, and remembrance of the pretty, anxious little face with the appealing eyes, and the tragic despair she had read in them, lent her the courage of which she felt herself in need. "I called to see Mrs. Truesdale, and we had quite a talk, and—I—I thought I might ask you to do me a great favor."

"Yes, oh, yes; he would be only too glad."

"A great favor," she went on. "I have some property at the edge of town, which straggles out into the fields in an uncertain way, the place is almost like the country, and I am just looking for some one to take charge of it for me." The face before her brightened visibly, seeing which, she went on with more assurance. "There are several cottages, and one of them I have furnished out—Aunt Delia liked it so much. If you would be so good now, I would like you and Mrs. Truesdale to live in it, and take care of it for me, and you could look after my houses and lands, you see, and still have time to work your garden, and—and I thought you would like it, and I would be so glad to have you both there, and—I—I have fixed a salary, too, you know. Minnie will tell you all about that, and now, do you think you can come?

Think over it, please, won't you, and let me know to-morrow?"

"Indeed, I will be only too glad, and—and Minnie will—" he hesitated, choking a little, the tears threatening to fall from his eyes—"Miss Weir, this great kindness is—is——"

"Is all to myself," she said, coming to the rescue, "and I am so much obliged to you. Send me word to-morrow. Good-by."

She walked away with a very light step. There is nothing like a good action to make the footstep light, and she left a very happy man, leaning back against the box-laden shelves with a heavenly vision dancing before his eyes. A cottage—furnished—no rent to pay—a garden—summer—flowers—health—a salary—and his dear little wife cheerful and happy again. It must be a dream. "Would he be so kind," that was the way she had put it. Well, yes, he thought he would. That evening, when he returned home, his wife met him, smiling through her happy tears, and Joy, like a radiant angel, sat beside their hearth-stone.

"Sweet are the uses of adversity."

"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy."

Kindlier shine the stars when the soul is at peace with Heaven.

Evelyn made her purchases at another counter, and a moment after stepped out under the

awning and glanced along the street, looking for her carriage. She did not see it, but she saw a very well-known figure, very tall and straight, and muffled up in gray; a statuesque figure and a rather defiant profile, against a harmonious background of mist and rain. There came into her mind the vivid recollection of a certain morning on the mountains just a year ago. Then, he had seemed to vanish from her into the clouds; now, he seemed as if just put down again, and somewhat bewildered by his situation. A few quick steps brought her near enough to touch, very lightly, the arm of the figure with one little brown-gloved hand that trembled very much indeed; very lightly the fingers touched, but no fabric, known on earth, is dull and heavy enough to intercept the vital current from a touch like that.

The figure turned suddenly, and faced her.

"Mr. Harringford," she said, her voice faltering just a little.

"Miss Weir," he answered, taking her hand in both his own.

There was a moment's silence between Evelyn and Harringford, while they looked into each other's eyes, but in that moment each one read over a whole volume, got it by heart—a volume which can never lie forgotten on the shelf of life while there shall be left on earth two human hearts to learn over again the only lesson of

which we shall never tire—"the sad, sweet lesson of loving."

She did not withdraw her hand at once from the strong clasp which enfolded it so fondly, and which was eloquent beyond the power of words; and when she did she repaid the robbery reluctant with such a look as would have enriched a king.

"It is a whole year since I have seen you."

"Yes," he answered, simply.

"What *are* you doing here, standing in the rain?"

"Looking for you," said Harringford, with supernatural frankness. "And you," he continued; "may I ask, what are you doing here?"

Evelyn glanced up, with a smile that played upon her face like a celestial light. "I—was—" her lips trembled a little, "I was—looking for you," and with that the crimson mounted to her temples.

At that moment her carriage came up close to the pavement. The servant sprang down and opened the door.

Harringford leaned down, saying, hurriedly, "Evelyn, there is still a moment in which I may say what I have to tell you. I have loved you always and I love you now—speak—there is time—must I go or stay? Just one word." He bent nearer. She had been blushing; now she turned pale. She took a quick step forward

but turned her face toward Harringford as she passed close, touching him with her fragrant garments, saying as she did so, "Stay."

"*Stay.*" That word seemed to recreate the world for him. The flames of hope leaped up before his eyes until they appeared reaching to heaven. At once he felt within him as it had been the strength of a thousand men. He could have elbowed the planets out of their course. The passers-by—what, now, were the passers-by? What were their dull looks, their smiles? What was the rain? He did not know of it; a rain of millstones could not now have crushed down the giant spirit within him.

He helped Miss Weir into her carriage. She leaned toward him out of the door. "Come, Mr. Harringford," she said, "get in and drive home with me."

And so he did; she made room for him beside her, and he sat down; the servant closed the door and then clambered up to his seat, smiling, and chuckling to himself; in a moment more the wheels were grinding along the dismal street. The vehicle he drove was but one, unnoticed, among many others of like outward semblance—of like outward semblance, yes, but within! Well, perhaps the interior of a carriage, on a gloomy, cold, and disagreeable day, may not seem to be, at first thought, a perfect ideal of heaven; haply, one might

think it could not truthfully present a fair picture of elysium, but that depends, my dear fellow-mortal—that entirely depends. So then, the drama was ended, the actors were gone, and the reeking sidewalk became itself again, commonplace, dreary, prosaic; the rather young, badly-dressed man, who sat under the tattered oil-cloth shelter to sell fruits, looked after the disappearing carriage with sad, large, longing eyes, full of appreciative interest and astonishment. In his abstraction he had pushed some oranges from the stand, and as he gathered them up, he sighed heavily, and so sat, looking at the pavement, absorbed, dreaming: forgetting to call out the qualities of his wares. forgetful of his empty purse, forgetful of the cheerless misery of his life. Of what did he dream? God knows! Perhaps there be no souls that have not their visions. So let him bide. Who does not love to think of the spirit's enchantment? Each moment in which we forget this empty world is so much real life lived; and well might he marvel, indeed, for had he not just beheld the greatest wonder of the world?

Perhaps there is such a thing as wishing to see a friend you would like to talk to, but do not wish to meet; if so, that was the feeling John Lubbock had when he got the sight of

Harringford, as he came toward him. There were certain comforting things—or at least one thing—he would much have liked to tell Haringford; namely, that Evelyn was not engaged to the Englishman, if only he might stop there; but Harringford was a great questioner, and questions, just now, were dangerous. Harringford would want to know how he had found that out, and if he told him, then he would want to know how it came about and what else was said, and finally, he could picture himself hedged in and convicted on the spot. And yet, in spite of all these things, it was scarcely an hour after this when he felt an irresistible desire to find Harringford and tell him everything, although his reasons against it remained as good as before. He was now thoroughly convinced that twoscore years' experience is no safe guarantee, in this world, that life has nothing new to offer, no unexpected phases to be met; neither does it bring the soul into a quiet harbor wherein uncertainty is unknown. Alas, no! Blundering and foolishness do not scorn to be the boon companions of old age, even; insomuch that one is sometimes almost driven to believe that folly is the chief employment of old men. I do not know that stupidity, the power to make mistakes, and the inclination to persist in them, necessarily abandons any well-grown human being at any time, anywhere this side the grave.

It was not, perhaps, any moral conviction, nor spiritual deduction, nor any exercise of wisdom, nor even of common-sense, that made John Lubbock determine to seek Ruy Harringford and have it all over with him, although but a little while before he had been doing his best to avoid meeting him. It was simply a demand of his nature which asserted itself within him and which was arrayed directly against all that he would have called his judgment, his wisdom, his prudence. But he determined to obey it. It was a like obedience which had led him into his trouble, why should it not lead him out? So his dinner-hour found him at home again, but Harringford was not there. After dinner he went down to the old house, running over in his mind, as he went, the expected interview, which seemed an easy thing enough now that he had set his heart to it; but neither was Harringford to be found there. Well, then, he would at least go to see Evelyn Weir. Now that he was going in for obedience he would be obedient, and the impulse, the demand, within, being for peace of mind at all hazards, to Evelyn Weir's he went.

I would like—and I would like it passing well —to describe the wise folly, the tearful joy, the painful happiness of a real love-scene: following and presenting, perfectly, each shade of emotion

in the two spirits that approach each other by unseen pathways and meet, at last, enclosed from and forgetful of all the world, within the sacred circle of that divinest of all divine mysteries, the love of one soul for another; finding their brief heaven only by losing themselves each in each. I would like it, I say, and that passing well, for I should then have surpassed all mortals who have ever taken up the pen, and I could then lay down my own, assured that I had achieved a fadeless immortality.

I cannot even attempt the poor semblance of such an achievement, which I might, with infinite and nameless anguish of soul, hope to compass. I should but mar the picture which each mind conceives for itself, for I could not escape the compelling touch of ineffable sorrow which is inseparable, interwoven with all great beauty and glory; heart-thrilling but unstable visions which appear before us for a little time only, until we put forth a trembling hand and touch them, and with that they are vanished forever.

All great beauty and glory on the earth or in heaven, are of Love and what Love enacts and inspires. If God be not Love, no more can he be God; and we, if we love not, neither can we be the children of God's love, nor can any spark of His nature find lodgement within us.

Happiness is such a beautifier, such an ad-

vantage, in every way, to man and to all things, that I sometimes wonder why God should not, for his own pleasure, make true the optimist's dream of a world that is all good, wherein all are happy. Happiness is such a stranger on the earth, that when we see her, at times, walking beside some fellow-mortal, we are lost in wonder; and so overpowering is the magic of that presence that even the saddest souls forget, for a little, their own tears, perceiving the sweetness and beauty of joy, though it be not for them.

"And so, dearest, at last, AT LAST, I draw the breath of life for the first time; and looking into your eyes, as I do now, I seem to see but dimly, and I know what it means to say 'The joy of tears!' My heart is at rest, at peace with all the world. Time flows by me like a brook, lapping a peaceful shore with soft and rhythmic murmurs that lull my spirit to undreamed-of ease. Visions of the meadows' marge, with nodding flowers in the happy sun. Odors like the breath of June, waving of elder-blossoms in the winnowing air—these float like pictures before my eyes. I seem to hear the throbbing of your heart as though it were the music of a harp whose strings are fretted by a skilful hand, and whose answering cadences have power to charm away all weariness of care forever. And the

past is passed, the waiting and the sorrow, and we are our own!"

"Yes," answered Evelyn, with a smile that would have made a prince of a beggar.

There was silence while Harringford looked, long and lovingly, into her wonderful eyes. At last he said, "How well now I can comprehend what must have been the immortal anguish of that heart which cried out amidst the Scottish hills,

> "'And closed, for aye, the sparkling glance
> That dwelt on me sae kindly.'"

What a dreadful thought it is," and he turned away suddenly to hide the tears that started from his eyes. "Twaddle?" Yes, just. And I would to God we might never have need for other.

By and by Harringford stood before her, feasting his eyes upon the beauty which had once filled him with despair. He seemed to have grown taller, and every feature appeared to have taken on a nobler grace; every fibre of his being was filled with new life and energy. Hope welled up in his heart, like waters from a fountain, and the radiation from the uplifted spirit within shone upon his face like actual light.

Evelyn looked him over, proudly, from head to foot. "Do you think you could write me

something?" reaching out both her white hands to him, "something that I might keep as a memory of to-night. Could you?"

"Well, I could try. I feel that I might do almost anything—if *you* should ask me. You'll give me a subject?"

"Yes, I will; let me think a moment."

He went to the piano, and picking up a piece of music, brought it and sat down beside a little table, clearing a space and spreading out the blank page before him. "Now," he said, taking up a pen, "have you chosen?"

"Yes, I think I have," she answered, slowly; "could you write something in answer to a question?"

"Oh, yes, I'll undertake anything. Must it be in verse?"

"In verse? Yes, some simple kind of verse, though not—well—not long; what is it I mean? Not—heroic, I think you call it."

"Oh, it will be simple enough, never fear, and I don't think there will be trouble to keep it from being long, either, and your question—you must make it short and simple, too, you know, to suit," he said, smiling. "You see, I'm somewhat of a simpleton myself, and, altogether, with you—well, have you got it ready?"

"Yes, I have chosen," she said, "and this is my question: 'What Find We Here?' Now *don't!* What are you smiling for?"

"Well, I think I could answer that, perhaps, without going into the agonies of composition; I was just thinking that you will find *me* here pretty often in future, if I have my health. But there, if you are going to look like that—I am serious. Now, don't look at me too often, or I can never get on at all. So, good-night to all men; here goes." There was quiet for awhile, only accentuated by the sound of the pen at intervals; Evelyn stealing a sly glance now and then at the writer. At length the pen was laid aside and Harringford turned toward her as if to speak, but after looking steadily into her eyes for a moment he took up the pen again and added something, hastily, to what he had just written.

"There," he said, with a little sigh, "that is the end of it, and now, will your ladyship be pleased to hear it?—or perhaps you would like to read it for yourself."

"No," said Evelyn, "I had rather hear you." And so she sat, looking into the fire with sparkling eyes, her hands clasping each other in her lap, and her color seeming to ebb and flow with the rhythmic swaying of the verse as she listened.

And Harringford read:

"WHAT FIND WE HERE?"

"What find we here?" O lovely one,
O heavenly eyes so dear;
Think'st thou my longing eyes can shun
Delight when thou art near?

UNTIL THE DAY BREAK

How can I answer as I ought,
  How can my heart be cold,
My mind be just, when thou hast taught
  Life's dross to turn to gold?

Nay, art thou sad? grave then am I;
  What is thy question, dear?
We that on earth live, love, and die,
  Thou sayest "What find we here?"

"What find we here?" Turn thou thine eyes
  Else I my task resign;
The gods themselves could not be wise
  Looked they in eyes like thine.

So now my soul cleaves, with swift wings,
  The earth-encircling air;
And this the answer which she brings
  From dark lands and from fair.

. . . . . .

The balm of sorrow and the joy of pain,
  Some music and much care;
Short gleams of sunshine through the falling rain,
  Ambition and despair.

A little laughter and a world of tears,
  Love and a troubled breast;
Pale, trembling hopes, amidst a host of fears,
  A grave at last, and—rest.

So saith the soul, and yet, now that I gaze
  Into thine eyes once more,
I find my heart forgetting all dark days
  Upon this alien shore.

Death-griefs there may be, and there may be pain,
  But all is naught to me;
I love—I am not—earth and heaven are vain—
  I only live in thee.

He ceased and sat waiting.

"For me!" Her voice wavered a little, and for further answer she held out both her hands, saying only, "It is mine—mine to keep; and I will keep it always—always—remembering this day."

There was a loud ring at the door, and the next moment Mr. Lubbock was announced. "Could he see 'Miss Weir?'" "Indeed, yes, she would be glad to see him."

Harringford glanced at Evelyn, saying, "keep your seat when he comes in—let us surprise him." And seating himself on a low stool beside her, he took her hand in his, whispering something, hastily, in her ear. And so they waited for Lubbock to come in, which he did, the next moment, with quite a brisk step; for he flattered himself that he had profited by past experience and determined to allow himself no time for indulging in useless terrors. But he came to a sudden stand-still in the middle of the room as his eyes fell upon the, apparently, unheeding group. Evelyn and Harringford both lifted their eyes and regarded him blankly.

"God bless my soul," he said, and stopped, unable to go on.

"Amen," said Harringford.

"Do you wish to see me?" asked Evelyn, calmly.

"Yes—no—no—well, I had thought—thought of speaking to you—for a moment—if you were not otherwise engaged—but——"

"But she is engaged, John—we are both engaged, in fact; but if you would have it 'otherwise' why—well—it might be wise in us to consult with you, being a man of large experience in such matters."

But Lubbock was not heeding, not having comprehended anything that was said very well, his mind being full of his own troubles, and he was bowing himself out, behind a succession of blushings that would have made an August sunset seem lacking in color. "The servant," he said, "had mistaken—had said, in fact——"

"Here," said Harringford, rising and cutting him short; "come back here, you incorrigible idiot; we want your blessing, especially now, for idiots are, after all, the rightful *enfants du bon Dieu.* Come——"

"Yes," said Evelyn, holding her hand out to him. "Did you not promise your service to me when I should need it?"

"Oh, well, my dear but erring children—" Lubbock began, perceiving the trick they had been playing upon him, and entering at once into the spirit of the occasion—"if it's a blessing you are in need of—though I fail to see it myself—I will even out-Balaam Balaam, and I am ready to bless you from every point of the com-

pass, though it should take me a month to get through with it."

There were many explanations and congratulations, amid much laughter and a few painless tears, which dried quickly in the glow of perfect happiness which shone upon them like the warmth from the zenith-crowning sun, and Lubbock descanted nobly and with sustained fervor on the beauties of love, to the great, and pleased, astonishment of his audience, and of himself more than all—for his expectations of himself were easily surpassed—and he was soaring, with a childlike delight and with confidence and ease, in undreamed realms where he never thought to spread wing.

There is a strange fire that lurks upon the earth, even yet, thank God! It may be seen glinting the streams and running among the summer grasses; it glances from the faces of the rocks and glows in the deep shadows of the woodland. I have seen it in the winter, burning upon the gray and frozen slopes, wreathing the naked trees for an instant with a blinding glory and leaping thence into the air, upon which it seemed to ascend to heaven. Haply, the old Promethean flame hath not expired. It may be the immortals are with us still, and we had but the eyes to see. Albeit a spark of this fire had fallen in Lubbock's path. A flame had mounted to his brain; he did not know just

how it was, and he did not greatly care. The whirl of unsuspected events had seemed to catch him up in the midst of a quiet life, and if it were the Lord's will that he should spin before the eyes of his friends, like an inspired teetotum, why, he would even spin; and so he spun, and for an hour he may be said to have lived.

"And now, my dear friends," he said in conclusion, "if you should ever feel that you have need of further advice respecting this new and most happy relation, you will always find me ready to harangue you; ready with that pleasing and peculiar readiness with which all men discourse upon subjects of which they know almost nothing whatever. I have lived to see the obliteration of many fears and the realization of some of my dearest hopes. I am content."

One might like to linger here for a little, but it may not be. It pains one to turn away—to break from the magic circle enclosing these three, as a musical, soft-lapping zone of water might enclose and soothe to peaceful rest the central isle of some lagoon which sleeps secure upon the chafing bosom of the sea. It might please better, but it is the *flowing* of the stream which gives it a voice to sing:

> For the brook is always flowing,
> Though it ever seems to stay;

THE THREAD OF SCARLET

Though it always seems bestowing,
  Yet it ever takes away ;
As the sunset's crimson glowing
  Turns the landscape into gray.

And all things pass away. We love to gild
  The iron ploughshare with poetic gold ;
Still doth the furrow turn and graves are filled—
    There is no joy can hold.

PART FOUR

SILENCE AND A SHADOW

Is, then, the land of dreams a living land,
And is this living land, a land of dreams,
And I, a shadow of the shimmering sand
On which the sunlight gleams?

Would we return——
Once we had crossed to death's unlovely land
And trod the bloomless ways among the dead,
Lone and unhappy—after years had fled
With twilight wings along that glimmering strand:
If, then, an angel came, with out-stretched hand
To lead us back, and we recalled, in dread,
How soon the tears that, once, for us are shed
May flow for others—how, like words in sand,
Our memory fades away—How oft our waking
Might vex the living with the dead heart's breaking—
Would we return——
Would we return?

"Oh, well, in the name of heavenly grace, Ruy, what is the use of happiness at all, if you cannot just accept it and—and—well, *just be happy?*"

"I don't know," said Harringford, quickly, looking up, and gleams of light seemed to

flash from his eyes as he spoke. "I don't know, but I must suppose that question sounds to you, for the moment at least, like a sensible one; and perhaps it might be, coming from some being not human; but in fact, it is one of the kind whose only value is, that they may serve to show how utterly empty are the phrases in which we deal, seriously putting them forth as though they were filled with wisdom. If I could answer that, I could also tell you why beauty saddens us, why joy makes us tremble, why the anemone dies in June, and the sorrel blooms all the summer long, why the earth turns, why the locust is armed with thorns and the adder with fangs; or where thought springs, or what life is, or where the soul flies, or why a bird sings, or any of the thousand unanswered and unanswerable questions which Nature propounds to us with every onward step we take in the path of life—this pleasing, beautiful, painful, and mysterious journey from the cradle to the grave; every hour of which is big with more wonders than are written in all the books that men have made. If you will answer your own question, I will fall down and worship you."

"No," said Lubbock, "don't expect me to turn fool altogether and attempt to answer my own questions. I am neither psychologist nor metaphysician that I know of, yet, thank Heaven."

"Yes, that is the way of it," Harringford went on, not smiling; "all things turn to lightness and vanity. All that is on the earth, life and all that belongs to it, all that we have builded up, is only like so much foam, made up of innumerable bubbles. Born of the mysterious forces, we rise, somewhere amid the vanishing millions, standing, each of us, in our own minds, an example of Nature's greatest achievement, her most glorious triumph, after countless ages of infinite labor. We feel like giants, and laying about us furiously, smash a few bubbles, and suddenly, in the midst of it all, ourselves disappear and are forgotten in a moment; and if there could be left of us so much as a voice, only, that might speak, even for once, it could only say, '*I was—I am not—I thought I was a god, I was but a bubble.*'"

"Nonsense," said Lubbock, "even the bubble, while it lasts, does not refuse to be happy; it accepts, and wears graciously the garment which the sunbeam offers. You see I can phrase you, too."

"But do I refuse happiness? You exasperate me with your tape-line measurements. What have feet and inches to do with infinity? Even a fool does not *refuse* to be happy. I tell you there are things of which we do not even dream, or if we do, we count it as being only a dream; and yet we do not know what a dream is, nor

sleep, not even what *we* are. And these things are about us all the time. I know it. I catch glimpses which so startle my soul that I can scarcely contain myself for the anguish it brings me to see that nothing of it whatever is believed at all; and in the dreadful sense of loneliness which comes over me, I am glad to grasp the hand of some fellow-creature on his own terms, so that I may be assured that I am still in this breathing world. You cannot know all. I have been so happy, for a little while; it is the very intensity of my happiness that fills me with fears. It is of no use to laugh at them; I have tried that. Philosophy is nothing, reason is nothing; there is something within us which makes advance upon other ground, discarding utterly these so-called sure steps, which are so acceptable to the general mind. I have no formulated belief to bolster up, no pet theory which I would have accepted; I would be only too glad to escape from it all, to be at peace and find the rest, and seeming content, which others enjoy. Even my nearest friends have only smiles of unbelief for what they are pleased to call my chimerical griefs—but let it pass; I have already foreseen my own going out into the shadow-world—it is no matter; but I had a dream of a space for happiness here; to that I have always clung; now, I see—oh, well—you will only believe when all has come to pass;

and after all, you could do nothing to prevent it."

"'It,'—there it is again—'*it*,' and yet when I ask you what '*it*' is, you cannot give me the slightest idea. I will swear, Ruy, if I did not know you so well, I would say your mind was unsettled. Think of it for a moment. A man, in the very perfection of health, who has run a steep course, and run it well, and now, with the goal in sight, halts, falters, turns sick at heart. Talk about belief. My faith in you has been, always, greater than your own. Are you a man to turn back because there is a lion in the way? Why, I would have wagered my immortal soul upon it, that you would have fought your way through, if there were a thousand lions in the way. Why, man, you are about to lay your hand upon the prize: and here you begin to turn pale, because of some intangible phantom, some undiscernible shadow, which you say you see, yet cannot locate, nor describe. Why, these sickly fancies, these unreasonable intuitions are womanish, merely; they are enough to make me think I have been mistaken in my man."

"Enough; and so you are," said Harringford, with a sharp ring in his voice. "I have done seeking for a soul. There is nothing in anything. Go before I quarrel with you—but, no—don't carry that thought away with you." At once his voice dropped, and his words came in subdued

and melancholy tones, low and strangely musical. "I wish there were only lions, as you say, but there is something far beyond what you have pictured. I have no more to ask. Let your faith in me die here, and leave me to myself. I do not care to be mocked further. After all, we are alone, forever."

These last words were uttered as though he were already left to himself, and, indeed, although Lubbock spoke more than once, he made no answer, but, with his elbows upon the table, and his head resting heavily on his hands, he sat, looking straight before him, fixedly and forgetfully. And so Lubbock thought best to leave him—seeing he was in no mood for words—and yet he looked back, feeling a pang of regret, finding that Harringford took no note of his going, remaining still and immovable as a statue. "I'll be hanged if I know exactly what to do," he thought, turning in the doorway. "I'll see you again soon, Ruy," he said, for want of something better.

"Very well," Harringford answered, "and when you do—remember——"

Lubbock waited a moment, thinking he would speak further, but he did not, and went away reluctantly, feeling not well satisfied with himself. After he was gone, Harringford sat still for some time. At last he arose and went out to try the old remedy—a long, fierce walk in the

open air. Strange, it is, this turning of the soul to Nature; seeking to cure itself of griefs for which it finds no cause clearly defined, though it half-guesses the cause to be within itself.

After an hour or two Harringford returned to his room, having by sheer bodily exercise, and by dint of breasting the blustering wind, succeeding in escaping partly from the thoughts which oppressed him.

Arranging his lamp, he sat down and began to read. But there are times when all the thoughts men have put down in books seem shallow and far from the purpose; they do not reach us then, they are not at all commensurate with the needs of our souls, they seem tame and commonplace when compared with the emotions that stir within us. The soul seems never to have learned the trick of crying out in print. It is, perchance an impossibility. By and by Harringford closed his book and sat thinking—rebelling, inwardly, against his thoughts. "Why should we value anything?" he said to himself. "Nothing seems to have power against this demon of thought. It makes or unmakes at will. Why, then, do I not bar the door? Which is I, myself—I, who protest against this brooding spirit, or is it I, who dwell in thought, and so—am I that which vexes the clay I inhabit?

"Why am I compelled to fear myself? Per-

haps, even as the body contains and nourishes the seeds of death, which will, in time, overthrow it, so this spirit finds its own powers, accomplishing the death of its own peace. Oh, well, it may be only a parting sting of the old unhappy life which is loath to leave me. To-morrow I shall see Evelyn, and I shall be happy again."

For a week or more he had been supremely happy. All the earth changed for him, all old theories of life were swept away. When he walked, he seemed to walk on the air; soft whisperings were in his ears; comforting thoughts stole into his heart and nestled there content; every breath was an inspiration; every influence from Nature soothed his hungering spirit, as a balm from Gilead. He was constrained to smile at all his old doubts and fears; even the scars of past sorrows were quickly forgotten, and now, this sudden, haunting fear that had sprung up, without reason, kindled a desperation that was almost madness, seeing he could not escape from it; and his friend's well-meant attempts to argue him out of his condition had only served to anger him. But there is ever only one final goal for the thoughts of those who love. The heart must turn always to the object of its worship.

"To-morrow I shall see Evelyn, and I shall be happy." Suddenly his thoughts were diverted,

most unexpectedly. There came the sound of noisy flutterings, and, in a moment after, an unusually large insect began darting past the lamp, sometimes hovering for an instant in the strong light. Harringford watched it intently. He knew something of moths and butterflies, having heard Ainsworth tell some strange things of them, and the great size of this one, with what he caught of the color and markings, recalled to his mind some half-remembered incident of the past, some experience which he could not place for the moment. "A hawk-moth," he thought, "but they are not native here; it could hardly be that—and he watched it with growing interest. Often it darted close to his head, winnowing the air with its broad mottled wings, but easily eluding every attempt he made to capture it. Finally it began, from time to time, to flutter about the bracket which hung against the wall, just over the mantel-piece.

As was said before, the square of card-board to which was fastened the butterfly taken by Ainsworth on that last morning, was placed on this bracket; and it was perhaps the life-like appearance of this insect which attracted the other. Once or twice it seemed about to settle; and Harringford watching his opportunity, came very nearly taking it prisoner. For an instant it seemed to flutter fiercely in his grasp, and to his utter astonishment, when his hands touched

it, it gave forth a succession of squeaking sounds. In a moment his recollection was complete—it was a death's-head moth. A thrill of superstitious fear made every fibre tingle. He stepped back quickly and sat down, gazing blankly at the carpet, while a swift procession of images passed before him. India — yes — there was where he had first seen the death's-head moth.

The recollection of a certain night came back; but that could not be all? No, oh, ay, and then he vainly attempted to follow the thought which fled from him again into the dim shadow of forgetfulness. He could only dimly descry an elusive remembrance, and the pursuit was vain. With an effort, he brought himself back to the present and sought to shake off the sensations which oppressed him, and which seemed to hang upon him like actual weight which it required physical force to resist. Dreams! What had he to do with dreams? That was all past, all past. What had this to do with him? He was happy, was he not? Evelyn loved him, she would be his wife within a month—and her image, her miniature, which he had seen in that dream, appearing on the hollow disk of the strange flower—the flower—oh—the flower—why, it was a strange flower, too—that, too, he had seen first in India. It, also, had to do with the death's-head moth. At that moment the fanning wings touched his head; he sprang to

his feet and struck savagely at the creature, but it was gone. Growing more composed, he looked carefully for it; but no, it was gone altogether. He took the shade from the lamp, threw coals on the fire, made all the light he could, but the moth had vanished—and where? He sat down, half-smiling. Perhaps it had not been there at all; perhaps it was but an illusion. He sat chafing his hands, holding them out now and then to the warmth. The room seemed strangely chilled, and yet the night was very mild; he remembered he had only lighted the fire for the cheer of the blaze. "I must have dropped off to sleep. What a riddle it all is, anyway," and for a good hour he sat before the fire, lost in deep thought.

But the morrow came, and with the morning came new hopes. The world was rich in the glories of autumn, for October was but little more than half gone, and the next evening found him radiant and happy; all his melancholy vanished, as mysteriously as it had come. Evelyn's love comforted him, wrapped him about as a charmed mantle; her words of cheer repeated themselves in his heart. He was strong again, self-confident, self-reliant. He never tired of picturing to himself her smiling glances, which told of her pride, her faith in him and in his work — his work — that thought brought him back to the present moment. He lighted his

lamp and arranged his papers before him, bending over them with a little sigh of happiness. Oh, the sweetness, the beauty of labor, labor in which the heart takes pleasure; how the soul hovers over it, revels in it, magnifies it, while the heart fondly follows the patient mind, and the flattering fancy leads hope a wild dance, persuading her that the light which flickers upon the page is the gleaming of immortality.

Oh, dangerous, pleasing realm—the fleeting and fair heaven of vexed and unhappy spirits! For hours there was quiet in the room, as Harringford, bending over his work, urged his pen on from sentence to sentence, through page after page. At last, laying it aside, he leaned his head forward upon his hand, his delighted mind wandering afar, along the enchanted pathways, amid the wide fields of the creator's world.

His thoughts were busy, building, building, building, while his pallid features took on a touch of that peculiar beauty which comes, at times, to the faces of all who follow fondly some lofty ideal. Suddenly there was a loud fluttering of wings close by his ear—his fanciful world vanished in a flash, and with a bound his spirit came back to the present—he started up with an exclamation of impatience. The huge moth of the night before was darting about the table, striking clumsily against the books and papers, now here, now there. One moment he could

hear it, away in some dim corner of the room, the next, it would pass close by him. He felt exasperated, as though some flippant visitor had intruded upon his secure hour. It was no dream, this. This was evidently the same creature whose presence had filled him with a sort of terror the evening before. He had no such feeling now. He felt only the desire to be rid of the noisy intruder. He arose, and opening the door, succeeded after a while, in driving it out, and had the satisfaction to see it take its flight along the dark hall and disappear.

Resuming his seat, he gathered up the broken threads of thought and was soon lost again in reverie. At length the image he wished arose before his vision, and taking up his pen, he began to write vigorously. He had traced perhaps half a sentence, when the moth whizzed past his face, so startling him that his pen swept the page with a line like the course of a comet, and he glared about him in bewilderment for some means of relief. He tried the door again, but the moth refused to be driven out, and at last, after many futile efforts he sat down, determined to watch the movements of his fantastic visitor. Swiftly it swept the gloom, now in straight lines, now in graceful circles. Sometimes it seemed to dance upon the air. Seen by the light of the lamp against the dark shadows, its creamy color looked almost white.

Sometimes its movements were so quiet that not the slightest sound from its fanning wings could be heard; then, with a quick flout, it would dash wildly about the room, fluttering madly behind the curtains, or bustling and sputtering among the dusty papers and dead leaves on top of the high book-case, with such inconceivably loud knockings against whatever came in its way, that Harringford could hardly believe his own senses. It seemed absurd, that great, soft, downy-looking creature to be launching itself against things in that manner, like an ancient battering ram, with a hundred Romans at the ropes.

Harringford could scarcely repress a smile as he listened "That is part of it," he thought, "part of this strange energy we call life, cased up in that unreasoning, winged worm, furiously knocking itself about, until finally it will break its habitation and go out—and where to? God only knows. Perhaps we are just as senseless seeming, if we could know all." By and by the moth came to hover about the dead butterfly on the bracket, darting away and returning again and again, as though fascinated by it; perhaps it recognized some likeness to itself.

Once it alighted upon the page immediately under Harringford's eyes, resting for a moment upon the half-finished sentence, the writing of which it had so effectually cut short a little before.

It turned itself about, moving its wings gently, as though pleased to bathe in the glow of the lamp. Harringford watched it with great interest; he could plainly see the markings which pictured a human skull, and which gives to the insect its ghastly name, the death's-head moth. The broad wings were mottled and specked with brown, and were full five inches from tip to tip. "How poor Harry would have been charmed by this thing," he thought. He made a quick movement, thinking to capture it, but with a series of plaintive, squeaking cries it fluttered madly about the table and at last made good its escape. Harringford pushed his chair back hurriedly, remembering the old superstition about the dust which this creature is said to cast from its wings, and which causes blindness in anyone upon whom it falls.

"I do not wish to lose my sight just yet," he thought; "but it is rather a poetic idea and worthy of the Oriental mind," and immediately he became absorbed in the romantic possibilities of the thought. But what was this wanderer doing here, so far from its native shores? He had thought this species belonged to the other side of the water, altogether, and was rarely, if ever, found here; and why not capture this one and make a study of its habits at his leisure?

At once he began looking about for the moth. It was resting, with wings outspread to the full,

against the wall, near the little bracket over the mantel-piece, and to all outward appearances as moveless and dead as the butterfly whose brighter hues and more graceful mould had remained unchanged after more than four years. Harringford arose and approached cautiously. The death's-head semblance seemed to him startlingly distinct. At another time he might have felt some superstitious fears, might have regarded this visitor as an ill omen to himself; but to-night he was confident, life was strong within him, and he easily banished the morbid thoughts that had so long haunted his mind, refusing to entertain any of the wild fancies which the occurrence may have suggested. The moth remained perfectly still until he was quite near to it, when it suddenly took wing, and flew directly over his head. He turned quickly, looking everywhere in the room, but it had disappeared altogether. He was a little surprised, and after waiting a moment, crossed the room and opened the door, looking out along the hall, and to his greater surprise, it was there, and kept passing and repassing, right before him, plainly visible as it crossed the band of light which streamed out from the open door. Sometimes he could follow its flight, with his eyes, far out along the hall, and often it would seem to be gone altogether, then as he watched, it would come back, silently, looking twice its real size in the half-

gloom. At last it was so long away in one of its flights, that Harringford, thinking it gone altogether, went back into his room and closed the door.

He was about to seat himself again when he found the moth flying around and around him in a circle. Feeling a little worried with the creature, without trying to think just why, he hastily took up a newspaper, and folding it into a sort of clumsy weapon, determined to be rid of the tormenting intruder, even if he should be obliged to strike it down, though he felt he would rather not kill it; but when he came to look for it, it was gone again. He went quickly to the door, and saw it making the same slow journeys. He felt sure it must fly some distance beyond the range of the long hall; perhaps into the empty rooms, perhaps down the stair; a sudden fancy entered his mind—he would take the lamp and follow it. As he prepared to do this, he was half conscious of a kind of heart-sickness for a moment, and a voice seemed whispering in his ears, "Don't go—don't go." But he scouted the idea; his curiosity was aroused; besides, would it not return the moment he had settled himself to work? He would go. He took up the lamp from the table and started. Hardly had he reached the hall before he found the moth, moving along, just in front of him, with noiseless waverings to and fro, keeping ever within

the light from the lamp, but always just out of reach, and always just ahead of him.

Harringford was half conscious of the apparent absurdity of the performance; but there are times when the very absurdity of the thing lends to it a peculiar and fantastic fascination, and so it was now with Harringford. This ghastly thing seemed to invite him, and why should he not follow? He felt no fears. If there really was anything to be superstitious about, he would be only too glad to discover it; and so he followed on, the moth still keeping its wavering course along the dismal hall. Reaching the stairway, it began to descend; fluttering back and forth, a little way before, over the awkward, winding steps.

Harringford went slowly down after it, stepping carefully, and steadying the heavy lamp with his disengaged hand. When he reached the lower hall he saw the moth, considerably in advance of him, almost invisible in the darkness; suddenly it disappeared altogether. He went on, however, and stood just opposite the door under the stairway. It was the one, before described, which gave on the cellar steps. He was about to pass on to the rooms in the rear when the moth appeared again, coming through the crevice, by the door from the cellar, returning immediately as it had come. He pushed the door open and went in. The moth, with phan-

tom-like dalliance, advanced before him, ever disappearing and returning in its uncertain flight amid the deepening gloom. Slowly Harringford followed down the steps into the dismal passage. For a moment he had halted at the top, feeling a touch of reluctance to go further, but he had quickly overcome it and determined now to follow the strange creature until it should stop somewhere—it could not go much further—for now it had turned aside and entered the low, square opening into the place where he had found the dog. There was no outlet to this apartment of the cellar save the one through which the moth was now going and coming; approaching the light, only to recede again quickly into the darkness.

Harringford hesitated. His remembrances of that place were neither comforting nor reassuring; nevertheless, he went in, crouching a little, holding his lamp lowered and at arm's length in front of him. All was just as he had seen it last. The rubbish was scattered about. Some decaying boards, which had been thrown down, were still lying near the chimney foundation, and just above them the moth was now fluttering, pale and ghostly-looking, against the blackened wall. Harringford approached quickly, just in time to see it disappear behind the two or three boards which were still standing, leaning, in the angle formed by the chimney and the wall. These he

threw aside quickly, and, as he did so, saw the moth entering—not without some difficulty—a narrow crevice or slot, through a wide, dark-stained board or plank, which seemed to be built into the chimney itself. His curiosity was now thoroughly aroused. He began making a close inspection, and found that the plank through which the insect had entered, was really a door of some sort; for after brushing away the shrouding cobwebs, he found the rusted hinges showing plainly enough, and that the crevice through which the moth had disappeared, had once, probably, been a key-hole; though it bore but slight semblance now to anything other than a passageway for mice or other small vermin. The door itself appeared to be between four and five feet high, and by looking closer he saw that the woodwork continued, carrying the same dimensions, on up along the side of the chimney and through the floor of the room above; but so completely covered over and hidden was it with dusty cobwebs, that even a close inspection would hardly have detected any apparent break in the rough stonework; but near the ground it was now visible enough. The rotting wood had been scratched almost through in one place.

Harringford stooped and looked at the marks. "The dog," he thought, "what was he after?" He had for the moment forgotten the moth; now

his thoughts came back to it. "This is where it lives—I'll have it yet." He put the lamp down carefully on the ground to one side and looked about him for something with which to break the place open. For a time his search was in vain, but at last he found a short iron bar, flattened and wedged-shaped at one end—it was the thing Ainsworth had used for opening his boxes; it was brown with rust. Harringford seized it eagerly, and inserting one end of it at the top of the narrow door, began to force it open. Evidently there was some sort of lock which held it, for the upper hinge gave away first and the door was soon forced outward, two or three inches, but the short lever was no longer effective. Harringford leaned forward and peered, for an instant, into the opening. His senses refused to translate any definite idea of what he thought he saw. Suddenly, straightening himself, he drew a quick breath, making as though he would have exclaimed, but the words died with a hollow whisper in his throat. An ashen paleness overspread his face, and dropping the bar upon the ground, he laid hold on the top of the door with a frenzied grasp that had in it the strength of twenty men.

For a moment the fabric held, but only for a moment. With a desperate surge, which compassed the last atom of strength that was in him, Harringford tore the door from its place, falling

with it himself, as he brought it crashing to the ground. Rising to his knees, he reached out quickly with his right hand, grasping the stones in the rough wall, to keep himself from falling, and there he remained, fixed, glaring at the opening before him, his face set, rigid and moveless, as though chiselled out of gray marble. One would have said he was dead, but for the frightful gleaming eyes, dilated with unspeakable horror, fixed, scintillating with the unnatural fires which were consuming the despairing spirit within him.

The moth—oh, yes, the moth was there—the death's-head moth; and it was resting, quietly enough now, with wings outspread; resting upon the hollow breast of what had once been a human being; and above it was the real death's head, leaning forward, as if to look about it, with its hollow, sightless eyes, after so long imprisonment. The arms were raised high as they could reach, straight above the head. A rope hung down out of the place, and was piled in many coils and loops upon the shoulders, and twined about the arms as well. This rope, the shrivelled, upraised hands, with their claw-like fingers, seemed still vainly endeavoring to grasp. The garments, faded and sear as they were, retained, still, something of the wonted former mould—something which suggested a recognizable, though vanished, personality, and gave to

the figure a horrible life-like semblance, which, by contrast and association with the death's-visage that surmounted it, was more dreadful than would have seemed the hidden, and merely indistinguishable, skeleton. Mere nothingness seemed now to retain the form and functions of living entity; death seemed to have a tongue wherewith to speak, and the shrunken lips, silent and breathless though they were, seemed busy with the ghastly history which they alone might utter.

After all, there is a terrifying simplicity in the revealed fact, which appalls the mind. Our mysteries are solved, and then the things we made much of are as nothing, but instead of finding ourselves upon firmer ground, as we might reasonably expect, our footing is swept away and we are left trembling upon the brink of an abyss, into which we do not even dare to look. Then we see how short is our vision, how vain are our knowledge and our strength, how foolish is all our wisdom, and how impenetrable is the darkness amid which we grope, unknowing if the fabric of things shall hold for us through the coming hour. Death is perhaps a spiritual mystery to us, for the reason only, that our souls revolt from the miserable image of this commonplace ending—because of the utter futility of any attempt to connect any ideas of beauty or happiness with the barren and brutal fact of physical dissolution.

To one who was a stranger, who did not know this figure leaning forward, now, until the lamplight pictured the fearful shadow of it upon the wall, it might have been only the remnant of what had once been a fellow-creature, no more; but to Harringford this was the dreadful index pointing to the vanished life—a particular life, which was present still despite the body's wreck, inseparably interwoven with his own. All that he knew of the joys, the follies, and the sufferings of that life, its loves, its hopes, its aspirations, were summed up for him in one word—Ainsworth. Merciful God! The fruitless surmisings, the vain regrets, the purposeless griefs! His intuitions had served for nothing; now the dream was no longer a half-forgotten airy phantom, but a destroying reality.

A dizzy sense of sinking came over him, with inward tremblings and nausea. His thoughts seemed to spin in a whizzing circle before his eyes. Once or twice he passed his hand across his forehead, and felt the cold drops coursing slowly down from his temples. He was unconscious of his action—he had forgotten whether there was a life in which he had part or if it had ceased long since; and yet, his senses were very busy. He even noted the brilliant micaceous particles of the stone, shining in the lamplight. He could feel, as it had been a crushing weight, the dreadful stillness which seemed to have in it

something deadly. There were large stones at the base of the chimney foundation, and from under one of these a huge rat came half-way out and watched with evil-gleaming eyes. A feeling of unbearable loneliness .came over Harringford. "I must find someone," he thought; "I must find John——" He turned himself about, and laying hands upon the wall behind him, arose slowly to his feet. Half-way along this wall was a small window, which opened to the side-ground, on a line below the windows of his own room; at this window he heard now a sharp rapping against the glass. For an instant he turned toward the sound—was this some new terror? Well, no matter; let it come. His soul was in that state of desperation in which he would have faced either death or the devil himself, indifferently. Slowly he went forward, and took up the heavy lamp. When he reached the foot of the steps, he stopped for an instant listening — someone was entering at the front door above — now there was the sound of footsteps coming along the naked floor of the hall. With firm-set teeth and fierce gleaming eyes he advanced upward, steadily, step by step, holding the light aloft, so that it shone full in his face, which was white as marble.

John Lubbock had left home early on that morning, and having returned by a late train,

was just passing by on his way back. He glanced up at Harringford's window, hoping he would see a light; for, late as it was, he was half inclined to stop and see Harringford. All was dark there, but a white glow, which seemed to rise from the ground by the side of the house, attracted his attention.

"That is the cellar-window," he thought. "What can he be doing there at this time of night?" He went in and made his way, among the weeds, to the window, which was partly below the surface of the ground. He stooped down as low as he could and looked in; but the little panes were splashed with sand by the rains, without, and curtained closely by the spiders' webs, within, so that he could make out nothing distinctly, but thought he glimpsed a figure rising from the ground. He had a key to the front door, and this he had taken from his pocket as he came along, intending to go in if Harringford should still seem to be up. He now had it in his hand, and with it he struck five or six times against the glass. Again he saw the shadowy outlines of a human figure, and saw the light lifted from the ground. The figure he thought to be Harringford's.

Rising, he went quickly around to the front door and let himself in. The hallway was dark, but he knew the situation of the door which led to the cellar, and toward this he advanced as

quickly as he could. Suddenly the door opened, and Harringford stood before him.

"Great God in heaven! is that you, Ruy Harringford?" he exclaimed, starting back against the wall.

"Yes—don't stand off—I was just starting to find you—come with me, John, I have reached the end—at last." And Harringford turned his face toward the door, pushing it open with his hand as he spoke.

"What is it, Ruy—what has happened—are you hurt?" Lubbock came close to him, speaking in a hoarse whisper.

"No, John, no—come, I will show you—I have—I have just found Harry's body."

Lubbock looked at him for an instant, speechless. His mind was busy. Suddenly his whole bearing changed; he had concluded. The intense expression of anxious inquiry left his face, and was replaced by one of hopeless anguish and sorrowful compassion.

"Come, Ruy," he began, persuasively, "come with me up to your room; I want to talk with you; I have some good news to tell you," and he laid a caressing hand on Harringford's arm.

"No, no," said Harringford, impatiently, "I know what you are thinking, John, and I could half wish it were true, but you are mistaken; my mind is clear as your own—come—prepare

yourself—we have the truth at last. Come with me and see."

And without a word further, Harringford turned and went slowly down the steps again, Lubbock following, bewildered and silent.

"It is here," said Harringford, when they had reached the place. "Look! this is all there is of us, John, after all." Lubbock gave utterance to a gasping exclamation of horror, as his eyes fell upon the shrunken, fleshless head, with its tangled, bushy locks, gray with dust and mould.

Harringford placed the lamp upon the ground, and the two men stood, silent, looking at the indescribable object before them.

"Oh, this is horrible!" Lubbock said, at last, rousing himself with an effort. "How did it happen, Ruy, how did you find it?"

"Do you see that—on the breast, there?"

"No—yes—what is it? I don't see well."

"It's a moth—a death's-head moth. The cursed thing came into my room and fretted me until I determined to follow and capture it. I followed it down here, and it went into that place. I was curious, I had never seen the thing before, and I tore the door open. You see what I found."

"But what is this thing?" Lubbock said; "what kind of a trap is it? Bring the lamp, Ruy; did you never know of this place before?"

"Never," said Harringford. "As I tell you, I saw it for the first time a moment only before you came."

Both began to make closer examinations. "You see it is perfectly invisible up yonder," said Harringford, "and all these boards were stacked here in the corner, against the door of it. You remember? We moved some of them when we were looking about in here."

"Yes," said Lubbock; "why didn't we see it, then, I wonder?"

"It must have been covered up with webs and litter," said Harringford.

"Yes, but what was it like when you found it?"

"See here, "said Harringford, lifting up the door and turning it about, against the wall, "you remember that dog? You see he must have been scratching here; he had this rubbish all torn away from it. I might have seen it then, but I never thought of looking behind the boards. I saw where he had been tearing at them, but I thought nothing of it. Now I see why it was——"

Harringford turned away, leaning against the the wall, feeling himself growing sick at the thought.

"This is dreadful, dreadful," Lubbock went on, as though speaking to himself; he stooped and looked up into the dark, square hollow of

the box-like arrangement, taking hold of the mouldy rope which hung down within it. "Why, where does this go to? It seems to go on up through the house." Suddenly he straightened up, with a startled look. "Ruy," he said quickly, "where does this chimney run? What rooms are over this place?" His thoughts were very busy.

Harringford thought a moment, and then, glancing toward the little window in the wall behind him, said, "That window is just below my room; this chimney must be the one which goes up between the two rooms that I——"

"That Ainsworth occupied," Lubbock broke in; "and there is a closet on this side the chimney in his—in your room. My God! what a hellish fatality—quick—there is not a moment to lose," and while Harringford looked on in utter amazement, Lubbock stooped to the floor, and with frantic hands gathered quickly an armful of the musty straw which was scattered about the place, and rushing to the little window, began filling the square offset so as to completely darken it.

"Why, what is it, John, what do you mean?" But Lubbock paid no heed until he had completed his work, then turning to Harringford, "What do I mean? Do you not see the danger you are in? If this be known, you are lost —nothing could save you——"

"Oh, well, why don't you speak out—plainly —what is this riddle?" said Harringford, with a gesture of impatience.

"Riddle? Have you lost your understanding? can you not see? If this be known, you will be accused of murder—not only accused—you will be convicted."

"Nonsense, John," Harringford began. But even as he spoke a shudder made his voice quiver. "Why, the absurdity of such a thing——"

'Absurdity!—the devil. Ruy, don't turn idiot now, at the moment when you have most need for all your wits. Come, get out of this," and he took up the lamp and started. "Not a word, but come; I know what I am doing." And he led the way with determined steps, Harringford following in bewildered submission, all his faculties stunned, feeling as though his heart were dead within him, and seeing his late promised happiness, like some tinsel fabric, dissolving in the darkness before him.

"Now," said Lubbock, when they had reached the room; "now we can talk it over." He put the lamp down on the table and closed the door; then he went into the bedroom, and looked about it carefully. Coming back into the study he opened the closet, and began knocking with his hands against the inside, next to the chimney. "I don't see it, exactly, but there must be

some secret entrance," he said, coming out again.

He glanced at Harringford, who had sunk into a chair and was leaning forward, his face buried in his hands, oblivious of all around him. Lubbock looked around the room, and going to each of the windows, he drew the heavy curtains securely; then he came close to Harringford and laid his hand on his shoulder.

"Ruy," he said, "come, man, rouse yourself, what we have to do, must be done—before the morning." He looked at his watch. "It is almost two o'clock now; come, this is the time for courage and action. You are in dreadful danger, dreadful sorrow, Ruy; I know it, but you must help me. I will get you out of your danger or share it with you."

Harringford straightened himself and looked at Lubbock, astonished. "I was not thinking of that," he said. "What is to be done about Evelyn? I dread to think of the effect on her when all is known."

Lubbock drew a chair up quickly and sat down beside him. "Look here, Ruy," he began, "We may as well come to a perfect understanding at once about this matter. This must never be made known to Evelyn, nor to anyone else—never."

"Why, you are crazy; that is simply an impossibility. Do you think I could ever bear a

burden like that? No, I must be freed of it," and Harringford started to his feet and began pacing the floor.

"Ruy," said Lubbock, with great feeling, "for God's sake, for your own happiness, and, what is more to you, for the sake of the happiness of those who are most dear to you, don't set yourself against me in this. I understand and appreciate, to the full, your wish to have everything cleared up at once. But you are in a coil where the only alternative is a choice of evils. I will not plead your own danger, but think for a moment of the misery you would bring on her. Trust me; I see my way clearly here; I would be willing to do as you wish, and to suffer the consequences with you, if there were any need for it, if it would be of any use, but it would not be. Do I not see the net that would be woven about you? Nothing on earth, nothing that love or friendship could devise, could save you."

"But I don't see it at all; do I count for so little, that I must defend myself against a dead man's rights—the rights accorded him by common humanity?"

"Count for so little," said Lubbock, with some show of rising anger. "You count for little more than a fool, now; like all men who are in love, you can see only from one standpoint. Do you want to see yourself supplanted

by a dead man's memory? Can you answer that?" In his anxiety and impatience Lubbock spoke unguardedly.

The shaft struck in the gold, but it was a dangerous speech, and destined to bear bitter fruit.

Harringford stopped in his walking and turned away, pale and silent, quivering in every fibre, as though a serpent's fang had struck him to the heart. The words had been meant for kindness, but there was a brutality in them that was like a blow in the face; their very truth pierced him like a two-edged sword. What had he not suffered because of that memory already? He had sacrificed his happiness once, and now, that he had found it again, that same memory arose like a spectre from the death-pit, demanding still, in the name of former ties, that he should rob his heart of its new-found wealth, and bankrupt his soul, paying to the last farthing this crushing debt, which a merciless fatality had imposed upon him, and which he did not, rightfully, owe; demanding that he strip the last hopes from his life and cast them into the grave, as though they could bring comfort to the clay, or warm for a moment the coldness of that cheerless couch. Harringford did not speak, but his silence was far more effective than any argument of words could have been.

There is a creature more subtile than death,

more changeable than life, with more colors than a chameleon or the sky, and as immortal as the soul; many are outwardly sceptical of its existence, but few pass from life without encountering it. There is in every heart a mirror to reflect that sorrowful image, and mean must be the soul that is not touched, seeing the face of a fellow-mortal changed by that blighting shadow, the death-in-life image of Despair.

Lubbock sprang to his feet and grasped Harringford's hand. "Forgive me, Ruy, forgive me," he cried; "I spoke hastily, brutally, out of my fears; believe in me, trust me. I see your trouble, but don't give way to it. I tell you Evelyn loves you, and only you; I know it, I have good cause to know it. Be cheered; love cancels everything. It is for her sake, as well as your own, that I ask you to be counselled by me in this. I see all the dangers which seem to be hidden from you. What could possibly be gained by letting her know? True, Harry was your friend, but have you not acted a friend's part? Who can prevent fate? Evelyn believes him dead; she has outlived her early sorrow; why would you revive now a fruitless grief? What could you give her but a dead body and a horrible remembrance? It would only bring a cloud over her life, it would endanger your own—perhaps it would separate you forever."

Harringford started at the thought. "But, John, it seems too—oh, it is too horrible."

"I know it, I know it; but it only seems so. I do not ask you to act unworthily; there is really no injustice to the dead. Even if you could bring any good to Harry now, which you cannot, you would not be doing right to sacrifice another in order to do it."

"You are hindering your judgment by a sentiment, noble enough in itself, I admit that, but by giving way to it you would work harm that nothing could repair. I tell you, Ruy, you must not stand off from me now. You must not leave me to stand alone here. Come, be guided by me. We will fight it out together. Don't think that I underrate the burden which I am asking you to bear; I do not; but I ask you to bear it. I ask you for your help now; for courage, coolness, and action here, and for endurance hereafter. The last atom of my strength shall be yours to help you. We must put sentiment aside—I mean this feeling of yours about Ainsworth—there are other and worthier sentiments that should outweigh this with you. It is not now of the dead you should think, but of the living. The dead suffer nothing. If you will not think of yourself, think then of Evelyn. I tell you my way is the right way; there is nothing else can be done. Everything in life for you depends upon the decision of this moment,

and I implore you, in the name of Evelyn's love for you, to listen to me. Together we will meet this cursed fatality, and together we can overcome it. To-night we must be iron; to-morrow we can be flesh and blood again."

"Well, John," Harringford answered, drawing himself up with a determined air, as if to set in place again the disjointed attributes of life and hope within him, "be it then as you say. For her sake we will do as you think best. You are the older man, and you are in a position to see your way clear, and, though there is something in me which revolts from this course, I will trust your judgment. As for me, I cannot think now. All the fiends from hell seem to encircle me. It seems best as you put it. May God forgive me if I am wrong."

"Be at rest there," Lubbock said. "I know we are right; and now we cannot delay a moment. That body must be buried out of sight, forever, within the next hour. We will better choose the place now, Ruy, before we go down, don't you think?"

"Where?" Harringford asked, turning his face away.

"Why, just there where it is; don't you think so?" Lubbock said.

"Oh, no, no, John; not there in the cellar. Poor Harry! Let us not leave him in that

horrible place. I could never bear to do it. Let it be outside, somewhere under the sky."

"But, Ruy, you forget; there is great danger."

"Oh, well, it cannot be helped. If this must be so, let us at least give him a grave on which the rain can fall, where the grass can grow. I could never consent to leave him down in that place."

"Where, then, do you think?"

"Why not in the garden? To the right of the gate, there is a sheltered place under the tree; why not make him a grave there?"

"Well, then, let us do that. Perhaps it is safer, too; the wall is high. But we must work in the dark. Let us go; we have no time to lose, not a moment."

And so they went down together, silently, and in the darkness, for they dared not carry the light; stealing softly down the creaking stair and along the hall, back through the rear of the house, fear dogging their footsteps as persistently as though their souls were, in truth, as guilty as their cautious and covert movements would have argued them to be. But there was no faltering now. Strange and ghastly as was their mission, it must be performed. The inevitable trend of circumstances had forced them into a position in which nothing but their sense of innocency could have sustained them; for there was no retreat.

Dismally the door creaked on its rusted hinges, as they slowly opened it enough to let them out. A wary step or two down and they stood in the little paved plot among the trees at the back of the old house. The garden-gate was but a little way off. A soft wind was stirring slightly, and from time to time the rustling leaves were driven and tumbled across the pavement, continuing their journey noiselessly upon the grass. The sky, with its sprinkled stars, was partly shrouded by light, swift-flying clouds. The blurred moon was far down in the west, and the sweet odor from the distant fields came on the air. The two men stopped and looked about them. Harringford drew a long breath, sighing deeply, and turning, looked for a moment up at the dark house, with its blackened chimneys, looming against the sky. "Oh, God," he said, under his breath, "how I wish it were morning!"

"Come," said Lubbock, "is there anything here to dig with?"

"Yes, I think so—in there," pointing to a shed in which wood had been kept.

What moments were these for both of them—the groping about, the whispered questions and answers, the horror within the house, which seemed following them about, guessing out their intent. Never before had they heard such ghostly murmurings among the trees; never before had the stars seemed to look so curiously

down through the swaying leaves, nor had the branches ever cast such strange-shaped, moving shadows on the ground.

But what they sought was found at last, and passing through the iron gateway they entered the great garden wilderness and turned aside, under the low branches of a tree which leaned out from the wall near by.

There was not much light, but there was enough. The earth was soft and yielding, and the noiseless spade was busy. Soon the fragrance of the upturned ground stole out upon the air.

Once or twice the steel grated against a stone, as it was being urged amid the clay, and once a bird chirped softly in the tree above; but for these, the stillness remained unbroken. By and by there was a slight clinking sound, as the spade was set down against the wall. "Come," said Lubbock, in a whisper, "Ruy, our work is but half done." And the two dark figures came out again from the black shadows, and stole like phantoms back through the gateway into the house. The creaking door closed slowly, and the key turned softly in the lock.

They were stealing up the groaning stairway again, feeling their way in the dark, when both men halted abruptly, each laying a hand upon the other, at the same moment, dumbly cautioning him to silence. "Sh! Listen!" whispered

Lubbock. They leaned forward over the railing, holding their breath. "It's a bat," said Lubbock; "don't you hear it striking against the wall? I have watched them, they do that way, often." Presently there was the sound of wings passing through the air nearby them.

Harringford drew himself back quickly. "No, John," he said, "it's the moth again; don't you notice the peculiar sound the wings make?"

For a moment they stood listening to the fanning of the invisible wings, which gave a sound like evil whisperings, as the moth passed and repassed, cleaving the darkness in its phantom flight.

"Come on," said Lubbock, leading the way; and, in a moment after, they were in Harringford's room, with the light of the living world once more about them. Both men breathed a sigh of relief, and Harringford sat down, showing plainly the wretched weariness which oppressed him.

"Ruy, we must think of something; we cannot carry the body without wrapping it up some way—what is there here?" And Lubbock began looking about the room.

Harringford was not listening. "Strange," he said, speaking to himself—"strange, that the soul should be the helpless victim of its own perceptions and associations. That transfigured worm is as harmless as a withered leaf, and yet,

the strongest reason cannot set aside the impressions which the spirit seeks to treasure up, though they are a bane to its comfort. Perhaps this moth flying in the darkness, bearing about with it that indelible and ghastly image, would be the better emblem of the after-life for some of us; for will not this death's-head mortality stamp its image upon the undying spirit, remaining with it, still, wherever it may go, following forever a sorrowful and immortal memory?"

"Ruy," Lubbock called from the other room.

"Yes."

"Where is that big shawl—that travelling shawl of yours?"

"It's there—on the shelf of the wardrobe, I think."

Lubbock appeared a moment after, spreading out before him a large coarse gray shawl.

Harringford guessed the intention.

"Poor Harry! It will not be the first time. Many a night when we were on the ocean together I have seen him wrapped up in that, sitting upon the quarter-deck, watching the path of the moon upon the water. What a voyage he has taken since! Life, love, intelligence, the so-called immortal things are vanished, and that commonplace, soulless fabric remains, unchanged, unmarred. It is a humiliating evidence of our limitations that we accept such a

farce seriously, what poverty it bespeaks, that we should cling to it, counting ourselves rich in such a possession."

"Yes, yes; but come, we cannot think of these things now; it will soon be morning."

"I wonder if it will?" said Harringford, ruefully. "I feel as if the sun could never rise again."

"It would rise just as bright as ever, if all that are now only asleep were dead," said Lubbock. "Let us learn from Nature not to vex ourselves with fancies. We must finish what we have to do."

Let us pass as quickly as possible over the scene which followed here. It was perhaps not more trying and dreadful than thousands through which men have been called to pass, but it ought to be cause for comfort, and an accepted evidence of spiritual health, that the universal mind recoils from too near contemplation of such things, seeking rather to forget the painful truths to which Nature sometimes appears to invite our thoughts.

They wrapped the body from sight—if body that might be called, which was but a pitiful remnant of what had once been the comely tenement of a happy and hopeful spirit—performing their sad task in silence for the most part, for their hearts were burdened with thoughts, such as the mind can frame no speech to utter. They

made some discoveries which indicated something of the cause and manner of Ainsworth's dreadful death. If there had been any doubts as to the body being that of Ainsworth, a ring which was hanging loosely on one of the fingers still, and the watch, which they found, stained and blackened, lying at his feet, would have sufficed to dispel them. When the watch was opened, his name was found graven in the case. The hands had stopped, marking the half hour between three and four, the exact time, as nearly as they could remember, when they had seen him at the window the day of Harringford's return. The bones of the legs, between the knees and ankles, were shattered, arguing that he had fallen with great force. The arms were fixed in their position, being raised straight above the head. Some pieces of broken glass fell out from about the breast of the coat, which was pushed up and wrinkled about the neck, and this led them to make closer examination.

They found that a rather large bottle had been crushed in the inside breast-pocket. The pieces showed that the glass had been thin and easily broken, and on the label, which still clung to one of the fragments, though it was much discolored, they made out, well enough, from the few letters left unobliterated, that it had contained chloroform. A vivid remembrance

came back to Lubbock, seeing this—a bright May morning, more than four years ago, Ainsworth, full of health and hope, and flushed from exercise, coming suddenly toward him in pursuit of the butterfly, which he captured and killed—killed with chloroform from this very bottle, which he saw him put back into his pocket again. He remembered having intended speaking to him about the danger of carrying it in that way, but he had forgotten in their talk. Then their conversation all came back, and with a thrill of conviction he recalled Ainsworth's strange presentiment. What a figment of the fancy it had seemed then, and now the frightful reality which it portended was before his eyes. At the bottom of the box-like death-trap down which Ainsworth had fallen, they found a square block of wood, to which the rope hanging down from above was attached, in such a way as to support it by the four corners like a small swinging platform, which could go up or down easily inside the place. The rope lay coiled in a heap upon it. Seeing these things, they began to guess out the tragic terrors of the death that had come upon Ainsworth, in a moment when life and happiness seemed most secure. Harringford was kneeling beside the body, bending over it, as if to take a last look. He uttered a deep groan. Lubbock took his hand tenderly, urging him to rise. Alas! even Lub-

bock did not guess all the anguish his friend was hiding in his own heart.

"There's nothing serious in mortality," Harringford said, unconsciously repeating the words of Macbeth. "It seems to me, John, almost an impossible thing, that this meagre heap, which is now no more than a bundle of sticks or dried leaves, could ever have been a living, breathing, creature like Ainsworth, a being to love and to be loved. Cover it up from sight; there is something in me that rebels against this cold, inexorable machinery of Nature, this building but to destroy, this kindness which is but to kill."

The burden which they now took up and carried between them was light, and easy to bear; but that other burden—which weighed down upon their souls, not lifted in their hands —how should one speak of that?

Small as was the grave they had digged, it was larger than was needed. Softly and in silent reverence they put down the poor, slight records of a broken life into the cool, fresh earth. For a moment or two both stood looking down into that dark gaping mouth which has a word for every heart, then Harringford, reaching up, drew down the bough that spread above him, and breaking off some branches, threw them into the grave.

"Poor Harry," he said, "let something of the

upper world mingle with his unconscious dust." Then he made a motion to Lubbock, who lifted up a spadeful of earth. "Earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust." With each pause the mould fell down upon the autumn-leaves, whose gold and scarlet glories were one with the brown earth that sprinkled them, all alike indistinguishable in the gloom of that dismal pit.

"God be merciful to us all," Harringford's voice continued, and then the gap was quickly filled. The mould nestled again to rest in its wonted place, and the rustling leaves, which drifted in the waking breeze, began to lodge there, swerving to the spot, as though the knowing wind swept, eddying from the wall with some intent to muffle up and hide from the opening eyes of morning, the secret which it only, and the darkness, knew.

The first pale semblance of the coming dawn was beginning to creep over the earth. The heavens were whitening in the east, and the dark dome of the tall tree, from beneath which the two men now emerged, was gently touched with gray light. The moon was gone, and in its place a flaming star stood, at the sky's far edge, like a shining valediction of the departing heavenly hosts, which vanish before the coming of the sun.

There is something so transcendingly beautiful, so unspeakably sad in the breaking of the

morning. The soul leaps forth to meet the pallid image of hope, with a thrill that seems like joy, but in the breast there wakes a nameless sorrow, and tears spring to our eyes; but whether they be tears of pain, we cannot tell.

"Come," said Lubbock, for Harringford had stopped, and stood looking past the tree-tops, toward the paling sky.

"Yes," he answered, and turning, looked toward the spot they had just quitted, and stretching out his hand he repeated, with choking voice, the words from the "Song of Songs": "Until the day break, and the shadows flee away."

And so the old iron gateway closed again, and the garden wilderness was left with its own loneliness. Here and there a late-blooming rose dropped from the stem, as though shattered by some unseen stroke which scattered its fading petals among the weeds. The noiseless fingers of decay were busy, and the quiet was disturbed only by the feet of the skurrying wind as it revisited, again and again, its well-known haunts, from which the gracious summer had departed.

Perhaps, then, better is a dreamless sleep,
Where hope awakes no fear, and thought no pain,
Than is a sleepless dream, in which we weep
Tears that are worse than vain.

PART FIVE

DUSK AND A CRIMSON CLOUD

But when the day is done, a crimson band
  Lies smouldering in the hushed and darkening west,
The groups of trees like whispering spirits stand;
  The robin's song lifts from his trembling breast;
The shadows steal out from the twilight land;
  And all is peace and quietness and rest.

THE winter was over and gone. The last snow had disappeared before the returning sun. The south winds had come to blow through the budding maples, and May had covered them with silken leaves. The locusts had bloomed and again had scattered their blossoms upon the grasses about the old Harringford house. The garden was now a tangled wilderness of bloom, and a countless wealth of roses mingled their perfume on the breath of June. Through it all, the old house had remained unchanged and lonely, desolate and deserted. New green grasses tufted the pavement, even to the very doorstep. Tall weeds stood up, all about the walls, as if tiptoeing to get a peep in through the faded shutters which sagged upon their loosening hinges. The sparrows took possession of every available nook,

and builded their nests where they chose; rearing their young with no fears of molestation. The pigeons plumed themselves at leisure upon the roof. No footsteps ever went or came over the threshold. No smoke ever rose from the towering chimneys. Within all was darkness and decay, but without, the gladness of summer seemed singing in the air, and under the tall tree which lifted its swaying dome above the garden-wall, the sleeper rested in undisturbed repose.

"Well." It was Lubbock who spoke. He had just taken a seat beside Harringford, under the maple on the lawn. Long bars of gold shot across the smooth emerald of the close-cut sward. The air was heavy with delicious fragrance. Innumerable roses looked over the low palings by the garden, their pink faces tipped with fire by the light of the sinking sun. The great golden disc of the mellow moon hung in the distant ether like a glowing lamp lighting up the eastern heavenly portal. The garden-gate stood open, and the path could be seen leading away between banks of flowers. Now and then the sound of a sweet voice floated out from the open window of the library, accompanied by soft notes from the piano—faint and liquid-sounding — suggesting the white and hovering hands whose fingers touched but tenderly upon the keys.

Harringford and his wife had been home some weeks.

"Well," and Lubbock laid his hand on his friend's shoulder.

Harringford lifted his head, slowly turning his pale face full upon Lubbock, looking at him for perhaps ten seconds before he spoke.

"Well," he answered, "it is a compromise. You must not feel disappointed in me, John, perhaps that is all there is for anyone — a compromise—'an ill-concluded peace,' if you will, in which fate has the best of us—something we must resign."

There was a silence for a time, during which Lubbock carefully removed the ashes from his cigar, and Harringford, reaching down, picked up something from the grass at his feet.

"Perhaps," he continued, speaking slowly, "I am hard to satisfy; perhaps I have been unreasonable; but we cannot change the nature which is born with us, we cannot change the world nor choose what form we might wish to wear. Perhaps there is no parting here from clouds, and yet I seem to see it in the lives of some, and I have always been a dreamer. I have dreamed always of one short hour of perfect happiness—and peace; and to that dream my heart will cling and nothing can set it aside. It seems I have exhausted every device. I have had, perhaps, the best of health, love, wealth,

change of scene, sweet companionship, counsel and sympathy of true and tried friendship. I have resolved, prayed, wept alone, and resolved again. I have tried to be patient, trusting that time would not be less potent here than in other cases, but, John, I fear it—fear it with tremblings that I dare not make known to you; fear that the burden grows, fear that the cloud is growing darker, and most of all I fear that Evelyn feels the blighting shadow of it. Sometimes I see a kind of wonder in her eyes, as though she had looked into my heart, not my face. I know—I know what you would say, I know my heart *ought* to be happy in such a love, and is it not? Can I say it is not? My life has been hers from the first. I only live when she is near me, and, oh, if it could have come some other way, as it might have come, then I should have—what can be the intent of this, John?" and he turned to look at Lubbock, his eyes burning with the hot tears which forced their way in spite of him—"the purpose? If there be intelligence behind the power which rules us, what can be the purpose in this, that should lead to good? I could bear that this phantom should follow *me* wherever I go; *that*, I may sustain; but if is to thrust itself between Evelyn and me—what then?—then I am lost." He turned away quickly to hide his features, which were convulsed with anguish. The large veins in his forehead became

swollen and corded, and a sharp pain was in his throat.

"Try not to think of it this way, Ruy. I do not mean to preach, only let me get near you, and help you, if I can. I know all the foolish phrases about overcoming circumstances, about putting away trouble, and all the rest of the idiotic cant, and I cast it all away as utterly useless; only let me urge you to take courage anew. I still believe we are right, I speak from the deepest sense of conviction, and I tell you that I firmly believe you will live to be perfectly happy, and soon, too, in spite of it all. Let us not look back more than we can help. There is nothing to regret—only the strange fatality of it; this must not be allowed to come between you, and it shall not."

"That is it," Harringford said, turning his face quickly. "It is the strange and persistent fatality of it all, continually thrusting itself upon my mind, which is adding new weight to a burden already as heavy as I can bear. It is because of this unaccountable continuing of it that I am unable to beat back the torturing thoughts which constantly assail me. Do you see this?" And he held toward Lubbock a strange-looking flower. It was this he had picked up from the ground a moment before. A piece of the vine had been plucked with the flower, and he was obliged to loosen one of the

little tendrils which had coiled about his finger. Lubbock looked at the bruised and withered thing, wondering what it could have to do with what they had been talking about. Harringford continued, "Do you remember, John, having seen anything more than the broken bottle in Harry's pocket that night?"

"No," said Lubbock, "nothing at all."

"Nor did I," said Harringford; "but there must have been something else. To-day I was over at the old place and I went into the garden. When I came to the—the spot, I found a vine growing up out of that very ground; not one only, but several; they had reached the wall and climbed to the top of it, and on one of them was that flower. I recognized it at once; I have seen them often in India—— "

"Well," Lubbock said.

"Well, there is nothing strange in that, of itself, I suppose; I brought home with me a paper of the seeds which I had gathered myself; there are three or four kinds, and I had taken a fancy to the name. It is called there the memory-flower. I sent the seeds to Harry and told him to plant them. He put them in his pocket and forgot them, I suppose. Most likely he had them with him when he fell down that place, and they were still with him when we found him. Some of them must have fallen there that night; that is all natural enough

seemingly, but that is not all. This is the very flower I saw in that dream, the one I thought I found growing in the pavement—that had the miniature of Evelyn in it. I need not go over it again; you know as well as I, all that has happened. Is it not strange that I should have found this very flower growing over Harry's dead body? I know it is all natural—everything is that—there is nothing supernatural, strictly speaking—cannot be. We do not need to create an outer realm in order to provide ourselves with mysteries. Death is natural, misfortune is natural; so are fears and the grouping of calamities, yet these are beyond us, and are they not to be dreaded as things over which we have not the slightest control? mysteries of which we do not understand even the first letter? Well, I have, perhaps, learned something by living. I have sought to come close to Nature, to these hidden forces which compel all things to exist, as they are, and which prevent them from being other than they are. I have found only one thing, definitely—that I need not have taken a step.

"I, myself, am part of it; the elements of which I am composed, body and spirit, are as independent of me, of my likes or dislikes, and as inexorable, in their own movement toward the final end, which I may half foresee, but not prevent, as are the great forces which move the

world and hold the eternal stars in their places. There is a time when we will all come to say:

> Here, then, the spirit is alone and blind;
> The world is lost, I am, myself, no more;
> And this loved body grows to me unkind,
> And thrusts me out upon an alien shore.

"But all things remain always new to me. The dreams of childhood and the over-awing mystery of all things remain. I am in wonderland as much to-day, as ever. Nothing has been explained away. The books have given names to things, but they would as well have given any other names, they mean nothing. The creature itself remains itself, behind the label, the same mystery it was at the first.

"I do not know that it is any advance at all, but I have come to mistrust utterly the wisdom of men. Perhaps, we never can be said to have advanced; we only move with the forces, never being allowed to hang behind them, and never equal to outstrip their steady pace. I know what you are thinking—we should not trouble; and that is true; nor would we, if we might choose. Neither would we grow old and wrinkled, nor would we suffer our eyes to grow dim, nor would we be crooked if we might be straight, nor hideous when we might be fair—and yet we should not trouble, no, not we. I tell you, John, man is expected to be more sublime

in this self-forgetful suffering, this uncomplaining endurance, than are the gods he worships. Just think of it for the moment. However it may be, in very truth, whatever may lie beyond, unseen; man's short vision, with which he must content himself here, serves to show him only that all the forces of Nature are against him now, and yet we find him admiring, praising, loving the very forces which he knows must compass his own destruction; leaning in blissful confidence upon that which speaks no tender assurance to his ever-anxious spirit, and going down, at last, smiling, into the grave which fate has prepared for him, singing a hymn in honor of Death, and cheerfully making his final couch amid the blackness and corruption from which every attribute of his being shrinks with loathings and horror such as his tongue cannot speak. It is an attitude and a station more sublime than anything the imagination has yet conceived for gods or angels, and yet it is the simple truth, the every-day—so-called, common-place truth—of this strange existence. The thought puts a crown of dignity upon the brow of the meanest, a crown of which no power on earth or in heaven can dispossess him." He ceased, abruptly, and reaching out, took the flower again from Lubbock's hand, and regarded it intently, in silence.

The sun had sunk from sight. The great

round moon began to gleam more brightly, and the shadows gathered closely about the darkening trees. The dew had begun to fall. A robin, perched high on the top of a maple, sent forth in liquid, wailing notes, his evening-song, and with these sounds Evelyn' s voice mingled, floating out upon the still air from the open window. She was singing a hymn. A tear slipped from Harringford's cheek and fell upon his hand.

"The memory flower," he said, huskily; "memory of the past, memory of the dead, memory of remembrance. It is an immortal flower, whose roots are fixed forever in the human heart."

"Hist," said Lubbock, softly, laying his hand on Harringford's arm, "here comes Evelyn."

And it was true; she was close beside them. Her slippered feet had made no sounds upon the noiseless grass. Perhaps she had noticed Lubbock's action. Harringford did not look up at once, but with a slight laugh raised his handkerchief hastily to his eyes. Evelyn stepped in front of him instantly and began pulling his hands away from his face. Lubbock had risen to his feet.

"Why, what in the world?" she began, but Harringford looked at her, smiling.

"Nothing, dearest. I should not have wiped them away, for I might have shown you a real, tangible compliment to your singing." He

caught her hand and pressed it to his lips. Lubbock was looking over the garden fence by this time, and so Evelyn bent down and pressed a kiss on each of Harringford's eyelids, and then one on his lips, saying, with a smile which made the sweetest of dimples on one fair cheek, "Whenever you find any tears there, just call for me."

Harringford arose and placed his arm about her tenderly. "Come, little one," he said, "this grass is growing damp." And so they went together into the house.

Lubbock swung himself about and looked after the retreating pair.

Once Harringford turned his head and called to him to come in.

"In a minute," he answered, but he did not keep his promise exactly.

Poor John, there were many thoughts crowding now upon him as he stood alone in the gathering gloom. Thoughts which greatly troubled and distressed him. He was beginning to realize fully the awful weight of the responsibility he had assumed. Harringford's morbid mental attitude boded no good. He could not shut his eyes to his friend's growing melancholy, and his increasing tendency to abstractions; despite the influences which had been brought to bear upon him, on which he had surely counted to dispel the shadows from his life. Swift conjectures as to what might possibly happen

flashed vividly before his mind at intervals with appalling distinctness, filling him with miserable apprehensions. He thought of the old house, shut up and deserted, standing there from day to day, nursing its black secret in sinister silence. He thought of the tall swaying tree which spread its thick branches out over that little plot of ground, fending that ground from the sun by day and from the moon by night, lest one ray should pierce the lacing shadows which gathered there; those patient, leafy arms, reaching outward and downward in protecting curves, as who should say, "Let no man dig the earth here?"

He had from the first realized how great were the dangers which threatened from without—actual and tangible dangers, which could be definitely calculated, and therefore determined and provided against. Perhaps these were no greater now than at the first; haply, not so great, but now he greatly feared he should be confronted with an internal enemy, an intangible danger from within, and what was left now to set in combat against this phantom. The other dangers he could set in order, and think how he could meet them—if it should come to that—but this, this haunting shadow, this elusive spectre, where was the weapon to be turned against it?

True, he had, even at the first, glimpsed the bare possibility of the danger which he now

dreaded. He had not lived his life for nothing. He had guessed something of the labyrinthine complexity, the fearful subtlety of the mind, and was distinctly conscious of a certain risk, but he was equally convinced that there was but the one path to choose. The material danger, as he saw it, he had opposed at once by prompt action, and with material means; to meet the other he had counted on many things. First of all, on Evelyn's love, absence, new scenes, and greatly on Harringford's own strength of will. Had he been mistaken? The question seemed to arise now out of the darkness, confronting him and demanding an answer. He had been standing with head bent down heavily upon his arms, which were crossed before him upon the fence. He now came slowly across to the seat under the maple and sat down. By and by he lighted a cigar and smoked it vigorously, the light from the enlivened coal giving, from time to time, swift glimpses of his troubled face, like a pale mask, appearing and dissolving again behind the clouds of smoke which vanished quickly in the darkness.

Harringford's danger, and his own also, as things now stood, had perhaps not been exaggerated.

Within a few days after the burial of the body, they had made discoveries sufficient to settle pretty conclusively all questions in their

minds as to the cause and manner of Ainsworth's frightful death, and also to prove, to Lubbock at least, that he was right in the course he had adopted. The secret opening into the death-trap, which they felt sure must exist, and for which they set themselves to search, had been found, as they expected, in the closet to the right of the chimney in the room occupied by Harringford, and before him by Ainsworth. There was a shelf in it, at about the height of a man's head; this they found could be pressed upward at one end. It was but a little, but it was enough to show that the broad shelf continued on over the thick panel which formed the side of the closet, and that it had a groove which fitted down on the end of this panel, and so prevented it from moving. By holding this shelf up, and at the same time pushing and striking against the side in different places, they found that when struck with some force, near the floor, the bottom part receded and the top came forward. From that on their way was clear. The side of the press was found to be a panel, which was hung on a strong pivot that passed through it, about half an arm's length from the floor. The pivot was of iron and pierced the stout jambs on either side the panel, which was, from a little above that point downward, three or four inches in thickness, all the other part being much thinner. When the top

of this wide panel was drawn forward and downward, until the end of it rested against the other side of the closet, the whole secret was revealed. It was simply like a broad, flat lever, the pivot being the fulcrum, and while Lubbock held the long end of it down, Harringford, taking the light, stepped in on the other, and found himself inside the box-like arrangement, which was something like a dumb-waiter, down which Ainsworth had fallen. Looking toward the top he saw a large pulley. The rope still dangled from it, caught on one side, and kept from slipping over it altogether by a large knotted loop. It was evident that this was the rope, part of which they had found coiled about below, and which was attached to the block-like platform upon which the feet of the body had rested. Ainsworth then had entered the place by means of this secret panel, and by some accident had let the rope slip from his hand, and had fallen instantly to the bottom. But the mystery was but half-solved. Why had he gone there at all, and of all times at that moment, when he had just seen his friends approaching? And what could have caused him to let go of the rope—he must have been well aware of his danger! Then there was the mystery of the crushed bottle in his pocket, and the secure closing of the secret door after his fall.

For days they puzzled over it, and little by

little the truth, or at least what seemed the truth, came out. First they found out why the door had closed after him. It was plain enough. They managed to reach the rope's end and draw it down, finding that it ran easily over the pulley, and had room to pass by the end of the panel, which made a platform inside the place when it was turned in a horizontal position, and so the movable block to which the rope was attached was easily drawn up until it stopped against the end of the panel upon which Harringford stood. Then came the question, How could the block be raised above this? The obstruction could not be removed without closing the panel. Of course, Harringford could easily have held himself up inside by means of the rope, and when the panel should be closed put his feet down upon the block and draw himself up by means of the pulley, only he was afraid to trust the rope—it might break with his weight—so he cast about for other means.

There was no other way for it; one of them must stay inside when the panel should be closed. Harringford found that by placing his knees against one side of the place and his back against the other, he could wedge himself in in such a manner that his body would support itself by its own weight, at the same time leaving his hands free. This he did, and when Lubbock had closed the panel, he easily drew

the block up high enough to rest it on top of that part of the panel which swung inside the trap, when it — the panel — was let down to a horizontal position again. Now they could see how Ainsworth could have stepped in on to this block and let himself down, and how his own weight, bearing upon the short end of the panel, would press it downward, causing the other end to lift up, of course, and so serve to close it securely as he slid down past it. But, then, what would he ever want to go down for? Evidently the place had been devised by the builder of the house as a means for secret communication between this room and the cellar. They could easily imagine how a man might let himself down in it and emerge by means of the door below, but when Ainsworth had discovered it the door must have been securely held by the old rusted lock. It was plain he had never thought of opening it, or at least never had opened it, and the old boards and rubbish were stacked against it; certain it was he had not entered the place with any thought of going down through it. What, then, had been his intention? What could have induced him to go in there at all—and at such a time? The thought of his having gone there just to hide from Harringford—merely for the sake of a poor trick—they rejected at once as unworthy; and then there was the crushed bottle of chloroform.

True, it might have been broken by his fall, but it was not likely.

They tried to reason it out. Ainsworth had been at the window the moment before. They both believed he then had on the dressing-gown which they had found upon the floor in the room adjoining. The doors of the wardrobe had been found open. He must have gone quickly from the window to his bedroom, to put off the gown, and change it for the coat in which they found him. It must be that he had just purchased a supply of the chloroform, and had neglected to take the large bottle from his pocket. Lubbock at this point recalled Aunt Huldy's railings against this "'intment," as she designated it, and with that came a new thought: perhaps Ainsworth had gone into that place hastily to hide something away. They now remembered the scientific work which lay open on the table, and from which he had been copying. Perhaps he had been experimenting with some dangerous chemicals—all at once it flashed upon them. He had some secret place in there in which he kept things he did not wish Aunt Huldy to see, knowing her mind about it, or perhaps things which it would be dangerous, even fatal, for her to find and handle. With this idea they went to their search again. They now found that there was a space over the top of the closet, which could be reached only by

means of the secret passage. Perhaps it cannot better be described than by saying that it was like a short continuation of the passage at right angles with itself. To reach this place, however, one must lift himself by means of the rope and pulley. Harringford made a trial, and found that he could raise himself upon the swinging platform without any difficulty.

What they found seemed to prove the truth of their conjectures. Harringford had lifted himself—resting his feet on the block—until he could look in, over the shelf. One of the first things revealed by his candle's light was a human skull, which grinned horribly upon him out of the darkness. There were numerous bottles and small glass jars, with small parcels, in mouldy, decaying papers. Several of the bottles and jars were overturned, and one of the latter had been broken. Farther back were indistinct objects, which Harringford had not been able, definitely, to make out; they might have been parts of the skeletons of some small animals. Harringford had let himself down, and had come out hastily, pale and staggering with faintness and nausea. The air he had been breathing, he thought afterward, must have been poisoned.

They closed the place up and never opened it after. The melancholy truth seemed plain enough at last. Harry had found this place,

and had made use of it, to hide away things he did not care to have seen; a sight of which would have sent Aunt Huldy out of the house, never to return. No doubt he had been ambitious to make some new scientific discovery, and had pushed his investigations far beyond anything his friends had suspected, or what would have been suggested by all that he allowed them to see. This, then, was the solution. He had gone into this place to put something away on that secret shelf; he had stood upon the square block of wood, and had drawn himself up—holding himself with one hand upon the rope—and had reached over with the other to place the thing, whatever it may have been he was hiding away, back, safely upon the shelf. Naturally, he was in haste, knowing Harringford would be there in a moment; he had pressed too heavily against the bottle in his breast-pocket; the glass was thin, it had broken; and in the sudden realization of his frightful danger, he had lost, for the hundredth part of a second, his presence of mind, letting go the rope in a wild effort to escape out of the place; and had dropped, with his full weight, upon the end of the panel which stood inward from the pivot, causing it to fly up, at the other, and lighter, end, and to close securely after him, locking itself in the groove of the shelf, which fitted down upon it, while he—with arms upraised, and

grasping with frantic hands, fruitlessly, at the spinning rope—had fallen helplessly to the bottom; and his coat—saturated with the chloroform, and pushed close up about his head, as they had found it—must have suffocated him at once, even if the fall itself had not killed him. It was too horrible, it was maddening to think of it—the dreadful closing about of the eternal darkness, the sudden obliteration, in the May-day brightness of life and hope, at the very moment when love seemed nearest, when his thought dwelt, enchanted, upon his heart's vision of the future.

Lubbock thought it all over, however, as he sat alone under the maple. He was anxious to fortify himself in his position, anxious to reassure himself that he had advised the right thing. The danger, which he had then foreseen for Harringford, seemed as clear as ever. He felt morally certain that with the facts made known, Harringford would be accused of murder, perhaps convicted, in spite of all that could be done. At the very least, he would be suspected, and that to a man constituted as he was, would be worse than death; and although Lubbock had found it almost utterly impossible to bring Harringford to this view of the case, he could not, even now, see that he had done wrong in urging the only view that could have

effect, namely, that Harringford should consent to do what they had done for Evelyn's sake, not for his own, for, he had refused, altogether, to listen to the argument respecting his own personal danger in the matter; nevertheless, Lubbock could not shut his eyes to it, and it was a danger which existed still.

There can be no need to elaborate a situation which, by this time, every intelligent reader must have fairly pictured out in his own mind. All that is needed is that he shall put himself in the same attitude, and come to the investigation of the case in the same spirit which would, most likely, have characterized the conventional and unimpressionable world—as Lubbock himself did, for in that way alone can one be able to judge correctly whether Lubbock acted wisely and rightly. Dreams, presentiments, intuitions, accidental causes, such as the strange appearance of the death's-head moth, it must be remembered, would, perhaps, count for but little.

Harringford had come home when he was not expected; he did not—as it would seem he ought to have done—go at once to his friend's room. He had a long consultation with Lubbock at the hotel. It was his proposition that the others remain at the gate, while he went to bring Ainsworth. He would be supposed to have been the last person who saw Ainsworth

alive. The old house was his own property. He would be supposed to know of the trap in which Ainsworth met his death. He was much the stronger man. They were both in love with the same woman. It was quite a while before he came down from the room. After the disappearance, it was he that had conducted the search in the cellar, he who had the rubbish heaped up against the place where the body was finally found. He had absented himself for years, leaving the old house unrented and untenanted during all this while. He had been known to be in deep melancholy, and had at last come back to occupy the very rooms in which Ainsworth had lived. He had won the woman for himself. He, himself, found the body, and was alone when he found it. These things and a thousand others could be brought up against him, and this was the way in which Lubbock had put it to himself. It might be interesting to some to picture to themselves what would have been the result of making the secret known.

Neither the probabilities nor possibilities need be enlarged upon here, for they have to do with this history only in so far as his consideration of them influenced Lubbock to take what steps he did. Great as are such terrors, there are greater than these, and it is with those greater terrors, from which nothing, save the mercy of

God, can protect the soul, with which we now are concerned. Against such fears there is no tangible defence, and all the invented and sophisticated forms upon which our intelligence is wont to rely, are vain—powerless, against the sure advance of the dreaded evil; even as are the shadows which lace the river's surface against the resistless tide beneath them. The evils which destroy us, steal upon us from a world which lies beyond our ken, and from that same unseen world must come the help which shall save us, if we be saved at all.

By and by Lubbock threw away his cigar and sat, for a little, looking at the shining of the street-lamp, which was making a halo of emerald light, as it came through the clustering, semi-transparent leaves.

His heart sank with the sense of dread and isolation which came over him.

His only sister, with whom he had lived, was dead, and he now made his home with Harringford.

He, too, had sought happiness; sought it in the only way that happiness can be found, perhaps, by a spirit truly noble—in the happiness of others. "Was he, then, not to find it? And Harringford—what of him?"

Lubbock leaned his head forward on his hands, thinking. But who shall dare follow the

soul when it enters into its own shadowed abode, and closes the door; facing its own image and confronting in silence its own unspeakable fears?

It was on an evening, perhaps a week after this, that Evelyn and her aunt came into the library, where Harringford and Lubbock sat talking.

"Look," said Evelyn, holding out a large cluster of hundred-leafed roses, "did you ever see anything so lovely? They are from the old place; that old garden is a perfect tangle of neglected beauty."

She turned to put them in a large vase, which, with some flowers already in it, stood on a small table near the window.

Harringford's eyes followed her every movement. Her presence was like some enchantment. Everything she touched seemed to retain thereafter, always, some transforming essence, imparted by the sacred charm of her beauty.

In a moment she turned toward him, her whole figure radiant in the sunlight which streamed in through the window. "And this—what flower is this?" putting her hand up to her breast, where she had placed a strange-looking flower. Pale, yellowish-white it was, stained with purple. "Do you know anything of it? I never saw a flower like it before—why—dear—what is it?" Startled, she looked at Harringford's white face, as he sprang toward her.

"Oh, Evelyn, my darling—quick—quick—take it off!" he exclaimed, in great agitation, and in an instant after he stood holding the strange flower in his own trembling hands.

"Why, what is it? Is it poisonous?" And she began rubbing her white fingers nervously.

"No, no—not that," said Harringford, "but it is a—it is an—" he was going to say an ill omen to wear one, but he checked himself, saying, instead, "it is an Indian flower, and regarded there, in India, with great superstition. I—I imbibed some of their fears myself, I think. I don't know why I did it, but I brought home some of the seeds of the plant. Promise me, dearest, that you will not go there any more—I did not know you ever went into the old garden — please, don't ever touch any of these again."

Evelyn promised, still looking, with wide, wondering eyes, first at his face, then at the flower.

Lubbock, who had comprehended all at a glance, at once engaged the good Aunt Evelyn's attention, and now, under pretext of showing her something, had left the room, and gone, with her, out on the porch.

"Tell me about it, dear; what do you know of it?" Evelyn said, coming close to Harringford, and putting one arm about his neck, she leaned her fair head against his shoulder, look-

ing down at the flower, which he held before him, upon the palm of his hand.

"There is nothing to tell, darling, nothing much—it is said to have an effect upon the mind of one who looks long upon it, making him recall all the sorrow of his life, as its name implies."

"And what is the name of it?" Evelyn said, softly.

Harringford had lifted from the table an old leather-bound Bible. He now placed the flower between the yellow leaves.

"It is called, in the Indian language, 'Hafiza-phul,'" he said, "which, in English, means 'the memory-flower.'"

He closed the book slowly, and put it down upon the table, and turning, he caught his wife to his heart, in a long silent embrace. She felt only the passionate kisses which were pressed upon her upturned face, and she was happy. What, if she had guessed aught of the wretched anguish hidden in the heart whose fierce throbbings she could hear, but not the voice of the stifled grief within it?

Both men sat up talking until a late hour that night.

"Well, then," said Lubbock, at last, "why not just tell her?"

Harringford turned his thoughts inward upon his own heart, and searched it, unsparingly, un-

mercifully. Why was it? Did he doubt her love? Not that—surely—no, that he could not doubt. No, why should he dissemble? It was because of fear. Fear—"Love casteth out fear" aye, so it did, and did he not love? Was he not loved? How, then, was it that he found in his heart this deadly fear? There was no denying it. It was there.

What if she should always after think of him, thoughts which she would hide from him—seek to hide even from herself. What if her heart should ask her, "Why did he not tell me at the first?" What if thoughts—thoughts against which neither love nor hate nor tenfold strength of will can oppose a barrier—should forever after picture him to her mind bearing the body out to hide it away—the body of a man who had loved her—could ever her love for him banish the picture once the necromancy of thought had set up the fatal image in her brain? No, he knew too well the power of the mind, its powers and tendency, even, to retain to its own hurt, things which the heart rejects, and from which the soul turns away—but in vain.

Deeper, still deeper, he bent his piercing vision. He would search his heart to its centre. He would at least be honest with himself. The hot blood mounted to his face, then went back, and left it pale again. Oh, it was of no use—it was there—the thought was there: "*Do you*

wish to supplant yourself with a dead man's memory?"

There they were—the very words. Memory had preserved them with miser care; had set them in fadeless letters, deep down in his heart—set them within the very centre of the heart, which, all his life long he had striven to keep unselfish; often fondly believing that he had done so, and now—well, let him not flinch—the blot had not been found before, only because it was so deeply hidden.

Again the crimson crept, like a flame, into his cheek, and sank again, leaving it colorless as ashes.

"Well, John," he said, "I might answer your question in many words, but they are not needed. It is a killing truth, but you shall have it. It is because I am afraid. I am just not brave enough to do it. I could burn at the stake easier."

After this Lubbock sat for some time silent. At last he said: "You must try to shake off these fears; they are unwarrantable, altogether. You foresee too much and wear your strength out, battling with spectres of things which do not exist. Think of it for a moment; do you imagine that Evelyn, loving you as she does, could—when she knew the whole truth—entertain one thought of you that would bring you pain to know? I think you are making a mistake. I advised for silence once, and I still think I did right; but

now everything has changed, much has come about since then; remember, it is through fear that we fail; besides, it is but justice to her. She sees that you are troubled. Have you the right to shut up your sorrow from her? Your sense of right ought to direct you in this."

"Right," said Harringford, breaking in, almost savagely, "there *is* no right! I wish to God there were, and that He would open my eyes, so that I might see plainly, and I would follow it, if the next step dropped me into the abyss. But there is no such thing; it is a shadow, an idea of the mind. Men stumble upon something in their path; they are fain to get away from it, to go around it or over it as the case may be; an idea strikes them, for the first time, perhaps; they call it RIGHT, and act upon it, and may, perhaps, succeed. RIGHT—it is a chameleon, that may change a thousand times within the hour! It suits its complexion to every man's mind. It exists only by relation, and the relations which give it its life are imposed upon us by the blind, hap-hazard of that chance which attends on the onward sweep of the one great, all-governing, but unheeding LAW."

"Right is but the shadow upon the dials of our own building. It points in a different direction or marks a different figure, at the same time, on every one of them that can catch the sun's ray, and yet, each man thinks he has harnessed

the sun, and has made successful note of Time's passing footsteps. Poor souls! they do not remember that we are the shadows which are fleeting by, while Time stays, eternal-visaged and unmoved forever; and that the undying sun, fixed in the heaven's centre, knows naught of all the dials on which his scattered beams may happen to fall.

"'My sense of right ought to direct me what to do.' What a poor, sickly, inadequate phrase is that, to apply to a situation like mine. It is like trying to stay a plague by some feeble, pious conjuration. Sense of right! Why, it was by following my own sense of right, and yours, that I have come to be placed as I am now. It would seem that if I had any sense at all, I should try to avoid what seems right to me, seeing the evil to which it has brought me; henceforth, let me rather follow blindly where destiny shall lead, and accept with resignation whatever fate may have in store; for, after all, the first is what we all do without knowing it, and the last we must do in the end, because we can do no better."

When Harringford ceased this bitter speech, a gray cloud seemed to have settled on Lubbock's face. Did Harringford in his heart treasure up against him the reproach his words implied? He refused to believe it, and quelled the suspicion in its very birth, for it caused a pang that was not to be borne.

And Lubbock was right.

Nothing could have been farther from Harringford's mind; he had been speaking with almost incredible rapidity; his words flew out like sparks from a wheel.

What he had said was only in the way of illustrating the thought upon which his mind was intent.

Lubbock divined as much, but for some moments he sat looking blankly before him, and when he began speaking again there was a tremulous sadness in his voice which touched Harringford to the quick.

"Well, Ruy," he said, "I have tried only to be a friend. I, too, have had my dreams." His voice faltered a little. "One of them was, to see you happy at last. It seems impossible now that I shall ever realize it. I cannot undertake to answer your arguments. They are not easy to answer. But there is something within me which moves me to warn you against such reasoning. It is only following an endless round which can in no way satisfy the soul. It is like setting the rudder at a fixed angle on a self-propelled boat, and sailing forever in a circle upon the surface of a lake whose waters are of a depth far beyond all our computations. It is better to steer for some one point, which the eye singles out, and toward which the heart inclines, even though we be wrecked upon that coast, or

go down in a storm before we have reached it. Do you not believe it?"

"Do I not? Indeed I do; with all my heart. Why, my dear John, we are at one; it is but a confusion of terms. In your mind it is the being guided by the, finally, unerring compass of conscience within; in mine it is being led by the unseen spirit which, for want of a better name, we call destiny. Conscience is the eye that sees the unseen, destiny is the spirit which leads across the unknown. But we may not despise the circle. There is much to be said for the circle. The globules of our blood are rounded, so are the drops of rain which nourish the earth. The very stones in the running stream incline to grow round. The life of man is a circle, so is the life of a nation. The earth, itself, and the moon, are round, so are the orbits in which they journey. The countless stars hold always their unwearied course in unending circles, and the suns, about which they wheel, are globes of fire. The great and all-embracing circle will round itself, at last, when the separated dust of all the worlds shall mingle again in the chaos from which they sprang. Existence, from lowest to highest, is but a circle of circles. The duration of time is best typified by the circle, and it forms, to the mind, the only satisfying image of eternity. Therefore, as I said, the circle, as an emblem,

is not to be despised. There must be, somewhere, a point at which all lines shall at some time meet, and to that point we are drifting, John, all of us, whether we know it or not, and whether we will or no. Haply, there is an advance—perhaps we had rather think of going onward in a straight line. It may be that the advance is like the spiral of the eagle's flight, in wide, slow-climbing circles, but upward forever, at least let us so try to hope."

He had risen while speaking.

Lubbock regarded him with much astonishment. There was an unlooked-for cheerfulness in his tone, which puzzled Lubbock, completely. He felt, too, that it was not the assumed cheerfulness of hidden sorrow.

It was sincere, unconscious, evidently; the assured and even utterance of one who had done with all things; whose heart was swayed no more by passion, or hope, or fear; as though, having stepped aside out of life, he calmly commented upon it, feeling only those relations with it which might exist between a student and his subject.

But the strangest part of it was, that Lubbock felt pained, rather than gratified, by this change. He would rather Harringford had continued to rail against everything. It was not so much the matter as the manner of his speech which surprised him, and it was neither

of these, so much as it was his own spiritual perception of some indefinable transformation in the personal bearing of Harringford himself. There is nothing in nature so subtle as that involuntary process by which one soul is made aware of another soul's attitude; even when all the tangible evidences may be against the assumption.

Lubbock was conscious of some moral alteration in Harringford. Outwardly, it seemed favorable, but in spite of that, Lubbock felt a distinct sense of loss. He looked at Harringford intently, and began to feel a bewildering kind of doubt, whether this man who now stood before him, would—if spoken to—really answer to the name by which he knew him.

It was not because the features were sharpened by prolonged anxiety and care; nor that the eyes, gleaming out from their shadowed circles, were lighted up with unwonted fires; nor was it because of the bright spot which glowed upon either pale cheek, nor because of the rapt and forgetful expression—he had seen that look overspread the face often, before—but there was something more than these. It was the indescribable air of cheerful hopelessness, a seeming gentle acquiescence, which opposed resistance that he felt nothing could break down, the semblance of a smile which seemed to cheat Nature of her right. It seemed only

the joyless signal of some sorrowful consummation within. The expression suggested a rayless flame which had power to consume whatever it might rest upon, but which could give forth no life; a painted boat, which remained motionless upon the bosom of a stream that flowed both ways at once beneath it. It was an appalling spiritual paradox, which Lubbock contemplated with mingled astonishment and fear. He talked to Harringford for perhaps an hour longer, bringing up questions concerning which he knew Harringford to be opposed to him, but he could stir up no opposition now, could elicit no expressions of discontent; and he finally left him and went to his room, feeling utterly miserable and wretched, because he had not been able to move Harringford to any show of anger; not even to bring a frown to his face, nor a word of complaint from his lips. But Harringford had given vent to two expressions that impressed themselves strangely upon his mind. Harringford had turned to the calendar, and after finding what day of the month it was, had said, "This day, seven years ago, I first saw and loved Evelyn." And after some further conversation he had asked, very irrelevantly, Lubbock thought:

"Can the perpetuation of wretchedness, the torture of a continual anguish, and the blight of a despair that is immortal, be rightfully called

the legitimate fruits of a curse, only?" And Lubbock having given an affirmative answer, Harringford had added, "*Then, to love, is the supreme curse of the human soul.*"

The words sent a shudder to Lubbock's heart, and he looked inquiringly into Harringford's face, hoping to see there something that would in some way contradict them, but had found only the same look of disheartening cheerfulness—a kind of refined and ambiguous placidity, which disarmed by its gentleness, and threatened by its ambushed subtlety.

He puzzled over it until he almost succeeded in convincing himself that it must be all a mistake; that he had, in some way, imagined it all, and that he would surely find Harringford, in the morning, the same delightfully melancholy railer against the existing state of things. It is a strange thing, but true, that we always think we would like to change our friends, and if we could, we would, perhaps, be greatly disappointed. We try to think their good qualities, and not their faults, have endeared them to us; but we are mistaken. It is a kind of unconscious self-flattery. Could they change suddenly, as did Harringford, we would find that we had loved them, mostly, *because* of their faults, not, as we like to think, *in spite* of their faults. It was with Lubbock as though he had lost part of his spiritual estate, had been bereaved of part of

his life, and he looked forward to the morning—the dear, cloud-dispelling morning—with peculiar impatience.

But the morning was not yet.

No wonder Lubbock was puzzled. The greatest metaphysician would have been equally so; and Lubbock counted himself but a sorry metaphysician.

The mysterious circle of experience in Harringford's life had rounded and touched. The psychic revolution was at last complete. He was, indeed, a changed man. Sorrow had been busy. She had done her work, at last, and who shall say she had not done it well? For fate has so linked the soul of man with Sorrow, that we cannot hate her if we would. Joy is well enough, but she is fickle. The beauty which Sorrow bestows is of a paler caste, but it is more attractive, and it stays, stays to the end; so that even death cannot, at once, erase the impress of divinity.

It is because all ties must part,
That farewell words are spoken;
It is the love that fills the heart,
By which the heart is broken.

PART SIX

NIGHT—AND A STAR AT DAWN

"A thought of far-off, unknown lands
Which soon the soul shall view;
A listless folding of the hands
That have no more to do.

"A sigh for half-remembered dreams,
The breath of faded skies;
The image of some face that gleams
Before the closing eyes."

THE weeks came and went, and all things moved on much in the usual way, as is the manner of them.

Few, perhaps, noted the change which had come over Harringford, or if they did, thought it for the better.

Evelyn was anxious, at times, but was easily reassured by Harringford's protestations. It was not that she ever suspected the genuineness of his seeming cheerfulness, but he was growing thinner, and she was quick to see that; but the weather was very warm, and he was always busy with his work now, and he easily explained everything whenever she spoke her

fears. The good Aunt Evelyn was ailing very much and claimed a good deal of Evelyn's attention at this time, for her aunt was almost as a mother to Evelyn, and she loved her dearly, and was now much taken up with the care of her. She was to be away with her aunt for a few weeks now, at "The Springs."

Lubbock, alone, was undeceived. He watched Harringford closely; but even he had to confess himself baffled.

Harringford did not attempt to repel him, never antagonized him. On the contrary, his spirit was yielding, and seemed to invite his advances; but it was like the yielding quality of a mist which does not oppose a solid barrier to our steps, but blinds our vision, so that we are driven back by our own doubts. There was nothing against which to strike, nothing could be grasped, the elements with which he sought contact seemed to have vanished, utterly.

On one of the low book-cases in the library there was a plaster bust of Harringford; a life-size head, which an admiring friend had made and presented to Evelyn. The leading intent had been, evidently, to give to the features what is called a "pleasant" expression; a kind of friendly robbery of the soul, not at all uncommon in such works of art, and which bears its own comment.

Harringford's face now looked like that; un-

ruffled, emotionless, colorless; like the unimpassioned clay. A refined and decorous kind of beauty, that had in it a deadly fascination. The effect was as of a white shadow. The fierce and varying rays, which betoken a living sun, had vanished. There was only a steady reflection, like the light from a dead world.

To one who had known Harringford, as Lubbock knew him, nothing could have seemed more sad than that changeless "pleasant" expression.

The sweet, long days of June passed away, and July's fierce fires had flamed in unrelenting fury over field and city; and now the clouds seemed to hang, motionless, all day long, in the dazzling skies of August.

All nature had grown weary and worn. The city was unbearable. The trees along the pavement seemed broken-hearted because of their sad lot, and stood drooping in patient wretchedness. The deserted houses, with their blistering roofs and tightly closed shutters, were cheerless monuments of depressed desolation, guarding the dreary shadows within them, and dumbly protesting against the heat and the impalpable, irritating clouds of dust without.

Away out of the reach of this artificial life the sacred fields and forests were full of solemn sadness. The wandering winds sighed fitfully, whispering softly, over and over again, the same slow refrain; "The summer wanes, the summer

wanes apace." The panting flocks, tormented with the dancing myriad insects, stood clustering in the shadows of the patient trees. The birds grew silent within the groves, and withered yellow leaves fluttered down and rested in the dusty beds of the streams. The brook was become but a voiceless remembrance. The highways were hedged with powdered weeds, and the dim hills, like remnants of some shadowland, stood faint and fading amid the shimmering haze. The soul of summer was turned to dreaming and forgetfulness.

Evelyn had gone with her aunt to the Springs, and had already been away some weeks.

Harringford was busy—busy as he had never been before. His outward serenity remained still unchanged, but the fever within burned with increasing intensity, and the hidden flame was steadily consuming him.

There was nothing in his movements nor in his speech that indicated the truth. His step was languid rather than quick, and his speech had lost altogether the rapidity and impatience that had characterized it. He even drawled a little, and was listless. It was only when he was alone with his work that the restless energy found vent. He wrote persistently, almost incessantly.

Lubbock had protested, but Harringford's only answer was that it must be done. "There

are times," he said, "when the advice of Solomon contains all the wisdom that can be applied to life: 'Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might.'"

Lubbock felt himself growing more and more helpless. He was being left more and more to himself.

He was obliged to think, to think seriously and deeply, and it was an occupation against which he naturally rebelled.

The more he thought the more he became convinced that there was more upon Harringford's mind than had yet been revealed to him.

Was it possible that Harringford was possessed by a sudden and overmastering ambition? He battled against the conclusions toward which he felt himself being driven, and one evening, when he had been sitting with a book open before him, staring at the page, upon which he saw not a word, he suddenly sprang to his feet, and throwing it from him, strode out into the darkness, as though to escape from himself.

The next day he was called away for a week, and Harringford was left alone. For three days he scarcely left his room at all, writing constantly. At last one day he threw down the pen and leaned back in his chair with a long, deep-drawn sigh. It might have been a sigh either of satisfaction or disappointment, or only of weariness. Perhaps the creative interest in

his work had ceased, and there was only now the drudgery of elaboration to go on with. He sat for a little, clasping and unclasping his thin hands, then rising quickly, he went into Evelyn's room and looked about him, bewildered—lost. He had forgotten for the moment where she was. Then began for him one of those untranslatable experiences which sometimes overtake the human soul. The strength in which he had armed himself fell from him in a moment, and all the pent-up and baffled emotions, all the fears and sorrows and untold longings which had been held at bay rushed at once upon him. A crushing sense of his loneliness overcame him. Before him was the couch upon which Evelyn had rested. He threw himself beside it, spreading his arms out over the white coverlet and caressing it with his hands. On the snowy pillow he fancied he could see the imprint where her loved head had pressed. All that was best and tenderest in his nature revived within him, and his soul filled with yearnings that are indescribable. He buried his face in the pillow, kissing the spot made sacred by its associations, his body shaken by the tumult of his feelings, as the firmament is shaken by the thunder; the bitter anguish of his heart melting into tears, as the storm-cloud dissolves and falls in rain.

If then Evelyn had found him he would have

told her his whole heart, and all might have been well.

At last Harringford arose, and going into his own room began, with feverish haste, gathering a few needed articles into his portmanteau. He would go to her at once. He would tell her everything. He came back into the room where he had been writing; the manuscript! he would take that, too. With a glow of pride and expectation he hastily folded it up, and put it in along with the other things. Already the burden upon his heart seemed growing lighter. He looked at his watch again, and not waiting for a servant took up his things and went down into the library. For a moment he glanced about him; then, going over to a table, he took up the old Bible in which he had placed the flower. He would take that along. As he turned, with the book in his hand, he saw himself in the long mirror. Something in his appearance startled him, and he was conscious of a sudden sense of depression as he knelt down to unstrap the portmanteau. When the book was disposed of he arose, and feeling a strange dizziness, reached out his hand to steady himself against one of the heavy chairs—his heart misgave him.

The long mirror was in a narrow space between two windows. Going up to it, Harringford pulled the curtains aside, letting in a strong

flood of light, then, standing near, he looked at himself closely.

For an instant his senses reeled under the shock, but he recovered himself quickly, and bravely faced the truth.

As he stood looking, the new hope which had sprung up in his heart began to droop, then it withered, shrivelled up and fell down into lifeless ashes. He could not go to her looking like that—she would not know him. As he turned away, his heart began to question. "Is it my destiny? Well, let it come; I am resigned." Unconsciously he began to repeat, in the slow voiceless measures of bitter thought, "If it be now 'tis not to come; if it be not to come, it will be now; if it be not now, yet it will come; the readiness is all; since no man hath aught of what he leaves, what is't to leave betimes?"

He drew the curtains again and sank down in one of the large, deep-cushioned chairs. It was the one Evelyn had sat in that happy evening—how long was it ago? One—ten—fifty—a hundred years it must be now. We will not follow farther. Whatever may have been the deadly struggle which went on in that soul, battling there in the gloom with its own fierce emotions, the picturing of it must be left to the reader's own heart, which may best inform him, according to his own powers to comprehend what it must have been.

There is in one human breast capacity for enough suffering to purchase happiness—not for one only, but for a race—if the reward of joy were commensurate with the anguish endured. But while joys may be enhanced by the gloom of sorrow, like the beauty of the stars which appear through the rifts of the clouded sky of night, yet they cannot be purchased by pain. They are a free gift. An age of suffering will not necessarily insure an hour of joy even, here or hereafter; yet, when in the goodness of God joy shall at last come to all His creatures—as it must if there be really any goodness of God, or any immortality at all—then even suffering may be seen to have its uses, in perfecting and rounding out, to its full strength, every faculty of which the soul of man, or beast, may be possessed; otherwise, it is a blind and fiendish thing, brutal and aimless, with absolutely no right to exist.

At the end of an hour Harringford arose and walked from the room. That was the darkest hour of his life, and it was past.

All was set aside—hope, fear, natural longings, everything; and he went steadily forward, clothed with that strength which no power, not the power even of Death himself, can take away from the resolute soul—a strength of resignation.

He went again to his own room, wrote a cheer-

ful letter to Evelyn and a note for Lubbock. In his letter to Evelyn he told her that he was going out to the country house for a little while, to finish up some work — they would go over it, together, when she should have returned.

He called in Joshua, an old man-servant, whose business in life was to keep up a pretence of helping about the garden, which he did so well that nothing further was expected of him. His joy was complete when he found he was wanted to go to Spring Forest and to "cyar Marse Ruy in de li'l wagon." The li'l wagon, to which he referred, was a light-running drag. Together they hitched it up, and together they drove away with the few things that were needed for their stay. The old man's soul needed no further satisfaction, his cup of bliss was full, to be "jes a cyarn Marse Ruy in de li'l wagon."

Spring Forest was a quiet place among the trees, six or eight miles from the city. The old-fashioned stone house—which was now partly occupied by the tenants who cared for the place —was not large, but picturesque and pleasing, and took its name from the spring which made music in the forest near by, all summer long, as it flowed in a clear and never-failing stream; slipping out from the rocks over sparkling mosses and falling down into the clear pool of liquid crystal, with a sound so sweet that even

the birds would listen, enchanted by it, forgetting to sing.

Harringford loved the place dearly, and one day, when he had been praising its beauties, Evelyn had said, playfully, "Whenever you shall write me a romance of Spring Forest that shall please me, Spring Forest shall be yours."

With what fond imaginings Harringford's remembrance now turned to that wonderful spring.

To listen to its flowing, to lave his face in its cooling waters, to look down into its transparent depths, and see the imaged tree-tops and the distant sky, and the far-off, floating clouds. Oh, for one deep draught, to slake the burning fever of his soul—just to be near it—to lie down in the long sprinkled grasses, where each arching blade was gemmed with sparkles from the wafted spray.

> To turn and leave the dust and heat,
> The dreary highway of mankind,
> Where all the weary plodding feet
> Tread down the dust of death. To find,—
> But once, some dewy, cool retreat,
> In which the fevered heart and mind
> Might put their burdens down, and meet
> Some dream returned—some hope resigned—
> Some joy—at once complete.

Had it been some fabled spring, of which one might drink and find happiness, or some fountain

of magic healing, he could hardly have sought it with more eagerness.

Four or five days after this, John Lubbock returned, having been detained longer than he had expected. He found the note which Harringford had left for him, and was rather glad to know where he had gone, believing it would do him good. The tone of the note was hopeful, and he little expected that Harringford wished to hide from him lest his very appearance should seem a reproach.

Lubbock put the note in his pocket, thinking he would go out to Spring Forest in a day or two.

Two or three days passed and yet he had not found exactly the opportunity he wished. He would wait a little and then he could stay longer, he thought.

One morning when he was dressing he heard old Joshua's voice below. He was talking to some of the other servants. Lubbock heard him call Harringford's name, and listened as they went on talking, but the voices dropped low, and he could make out nothing But there was something, just in the subdued sounds, which caused in him a tremor of apprehension, with which was mingled the sting of self-reproach.

He made haste and went down.

Old Joshua was just starting away, across the lawn.

Lubbock spoke to him, but the old man shuffled on, as though he had not heard.

There was something in his manner that made Lubbock think he was anxious to avoid meeting him. He called out to him, sharply, to stop.

Old Joshua turned about, quickly. He had on his left arm a basket filled with dainties—respecting which his good wife, the cook, had been instructing him at some length—and in his right hand he held the mail-pouch and a whip. Changing these quickly to the other hand, he made a polite bow, lifting his hat, and as he did so, a letter, which he had placed in it, slipped from the top of his venerable head, and dropped upon the grass.

"Howdy, Mist' Jawn—wal—life de lamb—ef dar ain' dat let'r dat Marse Ruy say not ter furgit; hit's curyus 'bout dat; I put hit in dar so ter fur ter git hit jammed clost ter my membry; 'kase, Marse Ruy, he say dat I sure ter furgit hit—en so I did, plumb en clar. Marse Ruy? —yas, sah—he say, he lookin' putty well; yas, sah; he say, dat he comin' on well ez he kin; yas, sah, well ez he kin."

Lubbock was confident now that the old negro was trying to deceive him. He took a quick step forward, quivering with excitement. The old man had turned to go. Lubbock seized him roughly by the shoulder and whirled him

about. "See here," he said, "how is your master? What is he doing? Tell me the truth—the exact truth, or I will shake every bone out of your old body."

"Name o' God, Mist' Jawn," said old Joshua, shrilly, "name o' God, doan—doan git riled agin a ole nigger, doan, doan; I be glad to tole yo'—glad ter tole yo'—ef, ef, Marse Ruy ain' done chawge, yas, sah, chawge me fur not ter say nottin' 'bout im ter nobody; yas, sah, he done chawge me——"

Tears came into the poor old man's eyes.

Lubbock's wrath was gone in a moment.

"Well, there, there, never mind," he said, softly; "I didn't mean to be rough with you; but tell me, is your master ill? I am going out with you; we must take care of him, Joshua."

"Yas, sah; yas, sah, Marse Ruy ain' jes right fusrate, nohow, en dats de Gord's truf, Mist' Jawn, 'deed he ain'. I been try'n' fur ter take cyar o' him, but dey ain' nobody cyarn't do nottin' fur him, looks lak. He doan res', Mist' Jawn, ee doan res', none; hit looks lak dat ee doan never sleep, en, en nobody cyarn't live lak that, yo' know—nobody cyaint."

"What does he do?" said Lubbock.

"Do? yo' know whar de big spring is? well, ee jes' stay right dar all de time, all de time, every day. Yo know de big seat dar twixt de trees? Um, he jes' lie dar; leaned up on de

piller, en hev ee's table brung out dar, en—en I jes' stay dar by 'im, en sometimes ee sits up a little an' watch de water runnin'; and sometime ee git ter writin' lak all possest; or else ee jes' read a li'l in de ole good-book, wat ee got dar on de table, but mos'ly ee jes' lie dar, en ee hev ee's eyes shet, jes' easy lak, 'kase ee ain' sleep'um—but ee keep a lis'nen to de water, whar hit's runnin' en runnin', twell hit soun jes' plumb lak a easy hymn-chune; slow, en lonesome lak; en dat's all ee do—jes' lis'nen. En Mist' Jawn," sinking his voice to a whisper, "ee's got trouble on ee's mine, seem ter me; en ee ain' fur fum de kingdum—yas, sah, I bleeves hit—dat ee ain' fur, ee ain' fur, nohow."

He ceased and stood fumbling the letter which he had replaced in his hat.

Lubbock did not make answer; his thoughts had been active during this speech. Should he despatch at once for Evelyn? And how could he word a message so as not to alarm her? perhaps he ought to see Harringford first. "What are you in?" he said, turning to Joshua; "can you drive fast?"

"Yes, sah, I kin, Ise in de li'l wagon, en Ise got Marse Ruy's black Samsum hitched in hit; yas sir, ee kin git long lak a ingine. Ee's ez ambishus es—es a elephunt—en——"

"What is that letter?" Lubbock interrupted.

"Well, Ise been jes' try'n' ter git my membry

'bout dat let'r—wat Marse Ruy say 'bout hit; en hit looks lak dat I cyaint jes' ketch de wo'ds 'zackly."

Lubbock took the letter and read the direction. It was addressed to a well-known lawyer, and was marked "*immediately.*" It would be hard to tell the thoughts which went spinning through Lubbock's brain. Could it be that Harringford was intending to make known the—no, that was impossible. Was it his will? The letter began to tremble in his hands. He would not allow it to be delivered; at least, not yet. And Evelyn?—He would despatch at once. He had some message-blanks in his pocket, and dropping upon one knee he began filling out one of these, writing with his pencil, and in his anxiety not to make it alarming, he made it, perhaps, as much so as he well could. It read: "Come home — everybody well—don't be alarmed—will meet you." He signed his own name to it, and calling a boy, who was making a feint at manual labor in the garden, sent him flying with it to the office.

"Now, Joshua, get me out to Spring Forest. Everything is depending upon you now."

"Yas, sah; come, Mist' Jawn, jes' git in—git in de li'l wagon; I git yo' dar, nev' feah—I git yo' dar." And never did the "li'l" wagon make such another journey. The black Samson swept along the dusty road like a flying

cloud, for he was white with foam, which flew back in great flakes. His iron-armed hoofs spurned the ground with swift strokes, and bore him onward like a meteor, his heavy mane tossing back from the arched neck in gleaming waves. Noting the magnificent action, Lubbock recalled the words of Job, "His neck is clothéd with thunder." He leaned far forward, as if to impart to the noble brute whatever aid he might from his own anxious spirit, whose swift flight had borne it to the journey's end and back again a thousand times since the start. At length they swerved aside through the wide entrance at the Forest, and the clash and clatter of their progress jarred against the close leafy roofs and rolled in broken echoes through the still and solemn air which filled those peaceful aisles. A moment more and they drew up in front of the long porch, about which the thick vines clustered. Lubbock alighted quickly, and old Joshua began to unhitch the horse at once.

Lubbock glanced at the broad chest, reeking with foam, and the proudly uplifted head, as the great beast blew the breath loudly from his distended nostrils.

"How is he, Joshua?"

"Oh, ee's jes' spilin' fur ter go, Mist' Jawn; ee jes' run plumb 'roun de yuth, ef yo' jes' giv yum de op'chunity. Look at dat chess. Looks lak de eend of a ingine biler—ee's jes' 'ginnin'

fur ter git steam up in dar—ees a Samsum, sure enough, I tells yo'." Joshua was talking to himself now, for Lubbock was already at the woodland gate, on his way to the great Spring.

What stillness and quiet, after the rush and roar of his swift journey. His own steps upon the grassy path seemed muffling their sounds, lest they should break the tragic silence which hung on the air about him. Bars of sunlight shot through the airy canopies of over-arching green, flecking the soft shadowed ground with shining gules. Across one of these a gray squirrel leaped, like a living flash of light; continuing its noiseless way, with coquettish starts, amid the tall pale grasses. The great columns of the trees stood, towering aloft, like rooted pillars of eternity. Involuntarily, Lubbock uncovered his head. Never had he felt so impressed.

He was face to face with the awful and majestic spirit of the forest.

Soon he heard the sound of falling water. He followed the sudden turning of the path, and—there was the spring: the thin stream flashing among the leaves like an ever-descending sword, and there was the huge rustic seat, between the two trees, and the table stood beside it, and there was Harringford.

He was sitting on the seat, leaning forward, his arms spread out flat upon the table, and his face hidden between them.

The dancing reflections from the pool played in linked rings of light upon the shifting leaves beyond him. Lubbock stood still and looked for a moment, feeling his heart turn faint and sick. Never had the unregarding silence of nature seemed so dreadful.

"Ruy," he called, in a breaking voice.

Harringford slowly lifted his head and turned his face toward him. "Ah, John, I am glad you have come," he exclaimed, in a clear, steady voice, extending his hand.

With a cry of joy Lubbock sprang to his side. His two greatest fears had vanished. I will save him yet, he thought, as he sat down beside Harringford and looked into the white, placid face, with its great gleaming eyes, which gave forth still a clear and steady light from the unconquered spirit within.

Harringford leaned back upon the pillow, which was placed against the tree at the end of the seat.

"What is it?" said Lubbock.

"I do not know," Harringford answered, bitterly; "something my soul has passed through, back of which I can never return; something I am approaching; but what—I cannot tell.

"Every step is into an untried and unrevealed future; perhaps it is the end.

"But why, why did you come here? Why did you not let me know?"

"I hardly know that, either. Something—we must meet alone—I have retreated, step by step, in a losing battle, and now my soul is in the last trench; and here I will make a stand. I defy fate, further. I will bring to the trial the shifting devices by which the soul is juggled out of its birthright; the right which it may demand, in the name of God's simple justice. I have tried, in every way, to overcome the trouble which has followed me, and I have failed. If it be because of weakness in me, it is a weakness for which I am not responsible. I can only be what I am; no one can do better than his best."

"But, Ruy, what is it that is upon you? I can see much to cause you grief; I have tried to weigh it all carefully, and, do what I may, I cannot find it adequate to this. Why will you not tell Evelyn? Why will you persist in cutting yourself off from help in this way?"

"Why do I not tell Evelyn?" An expression of trembling anguish played about his white lips as he spoke. "Why do I not supplant myself with a dead man's memory?"

"Great God, is it possible you have treasured up those words of mine? Oh, fool, dolt, blind idiot that I have been, not to have guessed it. Why did you not speak? What—why can you not see, Ruy, they were nothing—a phrase, merely, spoken in argument, when I was in the midst of fears, anxious, by any means, to win

you over to act with me in a matter where delay would have been fatal. Supplant yourself? Why you couldn't supplant yourself in Evelyn's heart by anything you could do. Why, if that is it, if that is all there is, Ruy, there is no reason at all for you to keep this burden on your mind any longer. It is this brooding upon it, alone, that has magnified it beyond your endurance."

Both were silent for a little.

"And that letter, Ruy, to the lawyer?" Lubbock said, questioning.

"My will. I thought it best, perhaps, to make my will. I do not sleep at all now; I feel myself growing weaker," Harringford said, looking at his hands.

Lubbock rose to his feet and sat down again, in a kind of desperation.

"Ruy," he cried, "this is all the sheerest folly! Why, one-half of it is but the fiction of an over-sensitive mind. See Evelyn, tell her everything, trust her; she cannot do other than love you better. Why, you have everything to hope—everything. We will both help you. You must take courage and call up your old strength. It is not possible; why, man, there cannot be enough in this to overcome a strong man like you."

"Strong!" said Harringford, almost fiercely; "do you expect me to throttle death, and hold

him off at will, now after I have been weakened by years of such battling against merciless fatalities as you have never even dreamed of? Strong? Why, I have been fettered with a chain weighty enough to drag a score of men down to death. You do not know all. The right, because it is right, reward, or no reward—that I have tried to follow. I did not expect a reward, and I will not complain now that I have not found it. It has brought me to what you see, and I will be glad, glad at last to be at rest."

"Ruy," said Lubbock, struggling vainly to make his utterance steady, "whatever there may be on the earth of love and trust, let these alone now find place between our souls. Do you see these temples, that are fast whitening? Long before one gray hair could be found there I loved you. Ask your own heart if I have ever failed you. Will you now let a veil come between us? You must not allow anything to hinder the help that I know I could bring you. You must believe me when I tell you that you are now looking at everything in a distorted vision, and if this feeling about having secretly buried Ainsworth is all——"

"But that is not all," Harringford interrupted.

"Well, but even with the keeping of the secret—your regret because you could not make it

known to Evelyn, and your fears about telling her—even with all, I do not see——"

"But that is not all," Harringford broke in again, with something of his old impatient manner.

"Not all?" said Lubbock, mechanically repeating the words; "why, there can be nothing more."

"Yes, there is more—more, that even you do not know."

"Do not know—I—about what—that I do not know?"

"About Ainsworth. Something of which I have never spoken—which is known to no one else on earth but only to me."

"But to you?"

"Yes, John, you have never known all my trouble; you could not guess it—how should you?"

For an instant there arose before Lubbock's eyes an image more frightful than death. It seemed to him that he had suddenly been bereft of his own identity. He glanced quickly at Harringford's face, then he looked away, out through the leafy distance between the trees. Could it be possible that was real sunshine? Was he in this world at all? Slowly his eyes traced a path along the ground until they came back to himself. He looked over his own figure as if gathering proof to convince his mind of his

own existence. At last, grasping the back of the seat, he forced himself to turn, and, once more he looked at Harringford.

Harringford was fumbling in his bosom in search of something, and was not looking at him.

Lubbock made as though he would speak, but the words seemed to turn back again from his lips, which had become dumb, like the lips of an animal.

At length Harringford found what he was looking for. It was a locket, which he opened and handed to Lubbock, saying, "Who is that?"

The sound of his voice brought Lubbock back to himself again. He took the locket and looked at the picture. "Ainsworth," he said.

"No," said Harringford, "that is a picture of my father, when he was a young man."

Lubbock lowered his hand and fixed his eyes on Harringford. "And Ainsworth?"

"Was not Ainsworth," said Harringford. "That was not his rightful name."

"Then he was—" Lubbock stopped. Harringford had turned his head to one side, leaning heavily upon the pillow, and a more livid hue seemed to spread upon the paleness of his face as he answered, speaking slowly, almost in a whisper:

"He was—he was my brother."

The locket dropped from Lubbock's hand, and

as the full realization of all that his friend had suffered rushed upon him, with bitter remembrance of his own thoughts, a moment before, he was unable, longer, to keep back the flood which was bursting his heart. He essayed to speak, but a loud sob only broke from his lips, and covering his face with his hands he leaned forward on Harringford's breast, overborne by the storm of his emotions, thankfulness, sympathy, remorseful self-reproach.

It was only for a moment. He recovered himself immediately, and sat, listening calmly and attentively while Harringford told him further of Ainsworth.

"You can guess it all, John," he said. "My father died when I was a boy of ten. Whatever may have been his faults, he loved me tenderly. He left a letter, which was given to me by my uncle, when I was old enough to understand it and to act for myself.

"There I read the story which I need not tell you. As all men will continue to do, forever, my father had sinned and suffered. He had done a wrong, and had put off his intended righting of it, until death, suddenly and without warning, put it all beyond his power. You will see in that locket engraved the name, 'Henrietta Ainsworth;' the locket was sealed up with the letter. That lady was the mother of Harry Ainsworth.

"In the letter, my father begged me, for his sake, to do all that might lie within my power to atone the wrong he had done; imploring me to seek out the child, and to befriend him and shield him, and, above all, to keep the truth from him always.

"Well, I need not tell you all that took place. I ran away from my uncle that I might seek the boy; for I felt that he was of my own flesh and blood, and nearer of kin to me than any other on earth. I loved him even before I saw him. My heart went out to him, because of his misfortune, and when at last I found him, and saw him looking at me with my own father's eyes, my soul was knitted with his, and I loved him with far more than a brother's love."

Harringford had remained calm until this moment, but now he put his hand up to his eyes, and the tears trickled forth between his wasted fingers.

"How often I longed to tell him that he was my brother, but I could not, for he knew nothing. His mother's brother had cared for him while he had lived, and from him he only knew that his parents died in his infancy.

"My heart has been baffled always. Harry died, never guessing with what tenderness I loved him; never knowing how near was the tie that held me to him. To think of it now is madness. If I had not left him so long to him-

self, perhaps it might not have happened. Poor soul, to come and go in the shadow, to live, nameless, with but one friend on earth who knew him, and that one unable to tell him the truth, and to die such a death; to be blotted out, and to lie, as he does, with no stone raised to his memory, no mark, even, to show that ever he lived at all. What a fate, and what a fatality, that I should thus be called to hide my brother's body in the ground, and to leave him, in silence, not daring to make known his resting-place, nor to inscribe a line in remembrance of his dust.

"So all has ended here—and who knows whether aught will be made right hereafter? Whatever is to know, I shall soon know it. At least I shall sleep. At least I shall find rest."

Lubbock sat with his head bent forward, his brows knitted, and his eyes fixed upon the ground before him.

Suddenly his face brightened.

All at once a light broke in upon his mind, as the sun bursts upon a dripping landscape, after the passing of a stormy April cloud.

He arose quickly to his feet, and grasped Harringford's hand in both his own.

"Ruy," he cried, with all the glow and fervor of the new inspiration which was come upon him, "Ruy, my dear boy, the morning has just begun to break for you. You shall not die—I

say you shall not. Death begins with the will first; the slaying of the will is his first triumph. Set your will against him. I will bring you life and light before the sun goes down; and if I do not, may Heaven accept me in your place; and that is but fair, for I can fill a wider grave than you. Your time is not yet; I know it, and until then, you are immortal. I am going for a physician."

"A physician," said Harringford, feebly, with a little smile of scorn.

Lubbock was already on his way, but he turned to say, "A physician—yes—but he is an old practitioner and his drugs are not compounded of earthly simples."

Once more the black Samson went thundering along the road into the city.

"Wait here a minute," said Lubbock to old Joshua as they drew up by the stone block under the sycamores in front of the house; "we are late, I think." As he was hastening into the house, Evelyn herself appeared at the door, smiling, but looking past Lubbock, toward the vehicle he had just quitted. She had already been home long enough to dress, and had arrayed herself in white.

Lubbock paused a moment, not speaking. Never, he thought, had he seen any creature so altogether lovely. He saw at once that she had

not received the despatch. He went forward quickly, holding out his hand.

"I just came home, you see," Evelyn said, blushing. "I—I just wanted to see Ruy, seeing he wouldn't come to me—and here I find you all out at Spring Forest. I think he might have been here, at least." The tears began to show, just a little, in her speaking eyes. "What is it—what is the matter?" she exclaimed, for she read something in Lubbock's face. "Oh, tell me, tell me——" and she grasped Lubbock's arm with both her hands.

"No, no—nothing, dear. Ruy went on here with his work, and—and—while I was away he went out to Spring Forest. I have just seen him—he will be glad you have come—but first I—come, let me tell you."

He went into the house, Evelyn following, and there she sat trembling and silent, while Lubbock told her all the truth; all that Harringford had feared to tell. He watched her face closely, not being altogether free from fear himself. It is my only course, he thought, and come the worst, I can only find the worst. When he had finished, it was as he had thought, as he had hoped.

"Take me to him—quick!" she said; "quick! quick!" That was all she said. But there was no need for words; one look at her face told him how well he had guessed her true heart.

"Joshua," said Lubbock, when he had helped Evelyn into the drag, "do you think Samson is equal to another flying trip?"

"Dat's Marse Ruy's hoss, yo' knows, Mist' Jawn. Ef hit's for Miss Evelyn he's gwine, den he's gwine ter git dar, ef he draps dead on de road."

"Well, it is," said Lubbock; "it's for her sake and for your master, Ruy's, too—but don't you think we will better put in one of the others?"

"No, sar, no sar, dey ain't none er dem kin go on wid Samsum—Samsum ee be des draggin' em—git in dar, Mist' Jawn, git in. Samsum jes' 'bout het up right fur ter run, now. Look at dem years, how dey's p'inted. Ee's got a spee't plumb lak a hornet. Is yo' all ready back dar?—'kase now, we's gwine."

In five minutes they were outside the city, and then Samson plunged forward fiercely through the heat at full speed, hammering the earth with his hoofs until it seemed to tremble under them, and leaving in his wake a long cloud of dust, which was like the smoke of battle. That was a journey which Evelyn never forgot. With a wild storm in her heart, which raged high over all the tumult and breathless rushing, amid which she sat like some immortal and fearless creature in her wing-speeded chariot; such as the bards of old pictured, whirling along the

dangerous slope of heaven, to the rescue of some famed and favored mortal, against whose life the Fates had led the battle.

Well, it is no fable, after all. Fortune is cruel—the Fates are fickle still, and yet, betimes, thank God, some spirit comes to turn the sharp blade from the swooning heart, and change the black world with the light of love.

The great, silent shadow of evening lay upon the eastern slope of the hill, as they ascended toward Spring Forest, with but slightly slackened pace; though now, deep groans burst from the breast of the faithful and heroic animal, as he bore bravely up, laboring for breath with fearful gaspings, his sight gone, his flanks heaving piteously. Still he went on; waking the echoes, and striking the sparks out from the stones, with his ringing hoofs, until, once more, he stood, with drooping head and trembling limbs, in front of the old porch, at the end of his last journey.

"He's gone, poor fellow!" Lubbock said, as he helped Evelyn out. She said nothing, only as she passed by him she laid her hand on the hot throbbing neck, saying, in a broken voice, "God bless you, Samson, God bless you."

The slant rays of the sinking sun shot like gleaming bars of gold through the dusking forest; glowing upon the great living columns, and

transforming the glistening leaves with touches of fire.

The continuous music of the water lifted and swayed upon the moving air.

Now and then the note of some wild bird came ringing through the solemn stillness.

On the little table some papers were lying, held down by a faded, leather-bound book which rested, lying open, upon them. From time to time the passing air caught the edges of the leaves, causing them to rustle slightly.

Harringford lay, resting upon his pillow, his thin hands clasped above his head. His pale face was in the shadow, but a shaft of sunlight lay, like a burnished cimeter, across his breast.

At last, he had fallen asleep.

He was asleep, and as he slept, he thought a dark cloud rolled slowly toward him along the ground. Nearer and nearer it came, blotting out all else. Nearer and nearer. He could see the grass bending beneath it, so heavy was it upon the ground; a moment more, and it would roll over him; suddenly it burst asunder and dissolved away, and there, in the midst, there stood Evelyn—his Evelyn—with tears in her eyes, reaching out to him her fair white arms.

With a cry of joy he awoke and sat up quickly—and it was true.

There was Evelyn, coming swiftly along the woodland path, clad in white, her golden hair

dishevelled, her arms outstretched, and her eyes beaming through the tears that could not drown the love which looked forth from them.

A flaming sunbeam struck full upon her as she came, wrapping her, from head to foot, in a transfiguring blaze of heavenly glory.

Harringford sprang to his feet, his senses bewildered, his heart fluttering wildly under the stress put unexpectedly upon it.

"Evelyn!" he cried. That was all. Already she was in his arms. She smothered his utterance with kisses. And they *were* kisses—kisses that would have brought the soul back into the clay, making it glad, glad, to return again to earth, even though it had passed the gates of Paradise, which open but once, and no more, to anyone.

And there were tears to mingle with tears; blessed tears that rose from the overflowing fountain of love in a pure heart.

There was no reserve, no holding back, no questioning.

She clung to him in silence. Circling his bended neck with her white arms, and holding him close, close, with the comforting strength which deep tenderness inspires.

There was life for him in her every touch. He inhaled it with the fragrance of her garments. His soul drank in hope and joy from the brimming fountains of her eyes.

One shining tress had fallen down across his wrist, like a twisting stream of molten gold. He caught it up and pressed it to his lips, and held it to his cheek. He could feel the blood mount from his heart to meet the touch; it made his flesh tingle.

"Dearest—*dearest!*" she said, "*why* did you not tell me—long ago?"

"Do you know all now?" he said.

"Yes," she answered, "all—*all.*"

"And you love me still?"

"Better! better than ever! A thousand times better; better than my own soul; better than earth or heaven!"

The power, the beauty, the divinity of love!

Seven long dreary years it had taken the canker of despairing sorrow to change Harringford to what he had become—so wonderful are the forces of the soul, so strong is hope within the heart—and now when the fire was burned low, and only ashes seemed left for the hand of death to gather, then comes love, and in a moment builds up again all that sorrow and disappointment had taken years to overthrow.

In a moment a new life ran with the blood along his veins. In a moment a counter-revolution took place within his soul and he was made a man again.

Is it any wonder that love should make men mad? Any wonder that poets should rave of it,

and should sing their worthiest songs in praise of this one divinest passion? or that the heart should refuse to wish for a heaven where love is not, or should refuse to fear a hell which love may enter?

And by and by they sat upon the seat together, and her broad white breast was his pillow now, and the burden was lifted from his soul forever. And the level beams of the sun spread their reddening fires through the branches which stretched above them; and the leaves stirred softly at times, as if with the balmy breathing of the earth.

And the wild bird sent forth its note from some shadowed covert, but the sound awoke no pang in those who heard it.

And the glittering stream fell; and the music of it stole out through the trees like a wandering soul, and the crystal basin dimpled and sparkled in the reflected light like a liquid mirror.

And the naïads came forth and circled about the pool. And the dryads left their prisons in the trees and went forth on the unbending grasses, ranging the dim silence of the forest to meet their lovers as of old.

And the years that were passed away were as nothing.

And the sorrow and the tears.

And it was little that they said, for happiness, like grief, hath little use for words.

Only her soft breast was his pillow, and her clasping arms comforted him.

And her cheek rested against his own.

And once she said, whispering, "Are we not now our own?" And he answered, "We are our own!"

And once they took the book from the table, and they turned to where a dead flower was pressed upon the page. And Evelyn lifted it and read the words which were stained with its color: "Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm; for love is strong as death. Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it."

If John Lubbock walked, softly and slowly, out along the woodland path, merely to reassure himself as to the wisdom of his course, I hope he may be excused.

And if old Joshua followed, with certain awkward shufflings and side-peerings and mysterious and deferential duckings of his venerable uncovered head, I hope that he, also, may be excused.

When Lubbock saw enough of the meeting to know that all was well, he turned about hastily with his big heart choking him, and his eyes full of tears.

Old Joshua, but a little way behind him, thus unexpectedly caught in the act of following, made a profound and elaborate bow.

John smiled a little, and stooped to pluck up a spray of grass.

Feeling thus encouraged, Joshua came forward, with a kind of eager reluctance, under cover—so to speak—of their presumed mutuality of concern and sympathy respecting a certain couple, who were needing it but little, now—to speak truth—and having approached near enough to give vent to the sentiment which burdened him in such low tones as he deemed fitting to the occasion, old Joshua said—with a glance to one side, that was inimitable, "Hit looks lak, Mist' Jawn—hit looks lak dat Marse Ruy hev plum forgit ee's—miz'ry."

And Lubbock walking away with him, smiling to himself, could think of nothing just at that moment, with which to assail the absolutely imperturbable front of that simple assertion.

> Love lifts us, gifts us, makes us gods again,
> Leads us to Paradise.

One evening late in September, perhaps a month after this, they were all sitting upon the porch at Spring Forest. The view looked down across the inward curving of the eastern slope toward the road, which lay along the valley like a ribbon. Beyond that, the fields stretched away and broke into a billowy, distant sea of soft empurpled hills.

Already the autumn was painting the landscape

with inimitable dyes. The slopes were green as in May, with the late-springing grasses, but the gum-trees glowed in crimson and scarlet, and the maples were ablaze with flame and gold; and the pale yellow leaves of the walnut and elm trees lay thickly strewn upon the emerald carpet beneath them.

If ever Nature can lull the spirit to dreamful ease, it should be when the sweet last days of September begin to dip the oak-leaves in their drowsy wine and hold them up to mellow in the sun.

Evelyn and Harringford were sitting together on one of the wide-cushioned seats. Lubbock was seated upon the step, leaning against one of the old wooden pillars of the porch.

"Anything stirring in town, John," asked Harringford.

"No, no," Lubbock answered, slowly, glancing down over the slope, with a little sigh of satisfaction, and brushing the ashes from his cigar. "No—there is the same brick and mortar monotony, the same soot and dust and blackened plants, with cast-iron fences to enclose them, with cast-iron mastiffs and Newfoundlands among the shrubberies, and terra-cotta pugs, of glazed and irreproachable dignity, beside the deserted doorsteps; that is all. You may rest content the world has nothing to give, more than you have here, nothing at least worth the having.

Have you finished that story of Spring Forest, yet?"

"Yes," said Evelyn, "he has added the chapter I wished, and now, Spring Forest is his own."

"Ah—and so it ends happily, then, after all," Lubbock said.

"Oh, yes," said Harringford. "Evelyn would have it so, and I—well, you see, there was a good deal of real estate, with all the real real-estate and appurtenances pertaining thereunto, as hereinbefore set forth, depending upon it, and so I just let them have their happiness. Just plain, good, comfortable, to wit, commonplace happiness, such as wears best."

"Nothing," said Lubbock, "is commonplace, nothing, except to vulgar and commonplace people. Wherever there is a soul it will glorify all things about it by the light which shines out from within."

"Why, hear him, Evelyn, with what oracular tongue he phrases it. The country is good for you, John—who can tell—a while longer and, you may be translating the language of the trees, or the whisperings of the midnight pool, sad-smitten of the moon; but, joking aside, you are right; there is wisdom in what you say."

"Oh, and it is that surprises you? Well, wisdom is rare, even with me—nevertheless, they spoiled a good philosopher when they made of

me a publisher, content to print the inferior works of other men."

"But they did not rob you of your vanity, did they now? Confess, dear John Anderson, my Jo John."

"No," answered Lubbock, "the abundant dower of each individual has fortunately forestalled all temptation to theft in the matter of vanity, else I might not so safely display the glittering lustre of my own wealth on this present occasion."

"Then you agree with Solomon, that all is vanity?"

"Oh, me," said Evelyn, with a little groan, "not vanity only, but vexation of spirit; if there is anything that shadows the earth with gloom, and completely weighs down the soul with wretchedness, it is the alleged funniness of men who are never funny excepting when they are unconscious of how funny they are."

"John, do you hear?" exclaimed Harringford. "We are cast out, eschewed, obliterated! Now you see what it is to be—*happy.*

"There is nothing for it now, but to retire and hold a meeting, after the manner of our good friends over on Bitter Creek, and to resolve that—Whereas, It hev seemed tew please a almity profi*dence*, fer tew go tew work, a drappin' of a fire-bran, in the shapes of a human specie, amongst of us, why, then, Therefore, Be

it known by these hyur presints, thet we hed druther, a long sight——"

"Oh, there," Evelyn exclaimed, "there is Samson now—I want you to see the mantle I have 'broidered for him."

There was silence among them as Joshua led Samson up in front of the porch for inspection. Slowly and painfully, the noble beast came forward, halting upon his stiffened limbs, and turning toward them his sightless eyes. A beautiful blanket, of scarlet color, wonderfully 'broidered in gold, covered his huge body, almost touching the ground at either side, and upon it, worked in graceful letters, were the words, "The Faithful Samson."

"Oh, why, Evelyn, darling, did these little hands do all that?" And Harringford pressed the white fingers to his lips. "Why, he looks like some Oriental vision."

"It beats the Jews," said Lubbock; "they had no 'broidered blankets for their deliverer; they left him to grind in the prison."

"Yes," said Harringford, coming forward, "but our Samson's case is similar, in the putting out of his eyes at least; the Philistines did it."

"Yes, the Philistines did it," said Lubbock, "and I suppose now that Joshua is come to lead him between the pillars of the temple."

But Harringford was not regarding. He went

out and looked at the work on the blanket, closely, and with quite a critical air. Lubbock walked around the horse two or three times, and finally seated himself on a bench, under a tree near by, saying nothing.

"It is like everything you do," Harringford said, at last, coming back to Evelyn, who stood upon the steps, "it is like yourself — perfect."

"Lift it off, Joshua, and let me see how he looks."

The old negro lifted the blanket, daintily, and threw it over on one side. The ample sanguine folds trailed upon the emerald grass; the beast lifted his head, proudly arching his glistening neck, and stood, moveless as a statue.

"Oh," Harringford exclaimed, "what a divine picture—what a glorious semblance of departed strength—what beautiful mockery—what a sad and magnificent ruin."

He seated himself upon the steps, drawing Evelyn down close beside him. "Is his sight entirely gone, Joshua?"

"Yas, Marse Ruy, hit's plumb gone; ee's eyes is lef', jes' ez dey wuz, en dey looks lak dey could see, but dey cyain't see nuttin'. Hit looks lak, when ee wuz ra'rin up de hill hyar, dat ee jes' pull de sight back outen dem eyes—jes' right dar, fur good en all."

"Poor fellow," said Evelyn. Samson turned

his head toward her, pointing his ears forward, and sniffing the air, knowingly.

"He seems to know your voice," said Lubbock.

"Yes, sah, 'cose ee know Miss Evelyn's voice," said Joshua, too full now for further self-suppression; "'cose he does; dey ain' nuttin' dat ee doan know. I kin heah um a nick'rn fore I git half way to de stable."

"Do you think he has a soul, Joshua?" asked Lubbock.

"Yes, sah, Mist' Jawn, I done beleeves hit, 'kase ef ee's out in de big fiel', en jes' nut thinking 'bout nuttin', en Miss Evelyn jes' step in dar, past de gate, why Samsum, he jes' lif' ee's head en—en look at her lak he kin see, and p'int his years, en nicker, jes' fur ter say, 'Howdy, Miss Evelyn.' How ee gwine told who hit wuz, ef ee ain done-got no soul? 'Cose ee's got a soul. I jes' talkin' 'bout dat yist'dy, en dat rat-eyed nigger Sam—fore Gord—one dese days Ise gwine take a ole back strop, en—en wah de hide offen dat fool nigger ef ee jes' keep on 'sputin' agin me, dat's wat I is—ee's been gwine down dar ter dat new school-house, takin' an iddication, twell hit hev plumb tooked all de natchul sense outen dat goose-egg head of hisn—en ee ups en lows dat Samsum aim got no soul, en dat ee ain' nuttin' 'cep'en jes' meat en bones. Ise gwine ketch dat nigger en wah um out yit!"

And Joshua began tenderly adjusting the blanket upon his charge again, with suppressed mutterings which boded no good for the unfortunate "rat-eyed Sam."

"Do you think Samson will go to heaven, Joshua?" Evelyn asked.

"Yes, I does, Miss Evelyn," he answered, turning to bow to his fair mistress. "Yas'um, en I ain' asking no bet'rn jes' ter git a-straddle o' Samsum's back on de mawnin' of de gineral rizin'. Ef hit so come dat ee kin git dem j'ints of his'n supple up, lak, dey ain' go'n be no trouble 'bout him gittin' inter de kingdom; kase ef Gabril jes' lean out en—en toot a li'l chune on de trumpit, twell Samsum kin ketch hit, and git his years p'inted ter whar hit's comin' fum, den' I jes' needs ter grab 'im by de mane, en jes' hole on, 'kase ee be bleeg'd fur ter git in dar, ef ee hev ter tromp some de angels on de groun', 'fore dey kin clar de way."

When old Joshua had led the horse slowly away, the three sat for some time in silence.

The waning light had faded from the hill-tops. The glowing clouds, which hung high above them in the shining vault, were tinged with a deeper crimson, and the cool, dusky shadows began to creep along the vale below.

Evelyn leaned her fair head against Harringford's shoulder. He put his arm about her and drew her closer, pressing his lips to the white

cheek which was softly shadowed by fragrant silken tresses.

"And so we are all happy at last." It was Lubbock, speaking out from the shadow, where he sat, under his favorite tree.

"We are," said Harringford, "we are happy at last. Thank God."

Lubbock continued speaking, "The right because it is right, reward or no reward. I was right, Ruy, was I not?"

The clouds are heaviest when they turn to tears;
Night hath no terrors Day may not destroy;
The blossom withers ere the fruit appears;
Sad must the heart be ere it find true joy.

"Yes," said Harringford, "let us hope that all sad hearts on earth may find happiness at last. That all souls walking in the shadows, weighed down with sorrows, may find strength to bear up with their burthens, until help can come to them. '*Until the day break, and the shadows flee away.*'"

"Yes, yes, dearest," Evelyn whispered, softly. "*Until* the *day break.*"

Sweet is the voice of fame; bright is the crest
Of proud Ambition's height; strong is the tide
That lifts the longing soul, but, oh, not best,
Though life be boundless, as the world is wide;
All, all, is compassed in one faithful breast—
A woman's love outweighs all else beside.

L'ENVOI

The cadence dies away at last, in sadness,
And silence wraps the instrument,—but where,
Oh, where—shall wake, again, the notes of gladness
Which, here, are hushed by brooding, dumb despair!
What power shall win that heart to noble madness,
Whose dust is wandering on the idle air!

"AND thus I thought well to leave them," Arthur Winchell said, with a little sigh, as he rearranged the somewhat dishevelled leaves of his manuscript, and laid it upon the table. "Though it makes me half sad to do it, for I have learned to love them, and now they go from me forever."

Mrs. Winchell bent forward, leaning upon the table, and looking at her son for a moment in silence. "And how did they come to you, Arthur, at the first; how was it, exactly?"

"Well, you see," said Arthur, "I have a world which hangs about me, and, like this real world, it has a horizon and a sky, its dark nights and its storms, and its pleasant summer days; and it so happens, that when this real world may be bright with sunlight, or transformed by the soft enchantment of the spring, that other

world may be wrapped in gloom, and filled with the portentous shapes and distressful visions, which I must see, whether I wish to or no; and then, sometimes it chances, that when this world is chilled and gray, made dismal and miserable, by the low-hanging skies and murky mists of some winter day, that my other world is cheered by a sudden summer, and my spirit revels in scenes full of unearthly beauty and glory; so that all the sadness, all the barrenness of the real world about me, is as nothing; even misfortune cannot seem to reach me then. Oh, there is divinity in us all, if—" he ceased abruptly, and looked at his mother, blankly, as if recalled, suddenly, to himself.

"But these, Arthur, these people about whom you have been writing—how did they come to you? I am anxious to know that."

"I hardly know," Arthur answered; "my spirit world is full of people. Sometimes I follow them around for years, and never write anything about them. That is more pleasure, for then they stay, and return to me again and again; and when they come they seem to just break through the sky, and I know them at once; and some I love at once, and others I follow about, and they become endeared to me, and they seem to know me, for they often return, after being away a long time, and always seem to greet me as old friends, with a smile of recog-

nition. And so it has been always. Some I have known and loved for many years, but these —well, I have written about them; they will be gone now, and I see that they will never return. Even when I send my soul after them they seem to turn away with reproachful eyes. Perhaps there is some sort of injustice done, some indignity in it I do not know."

"And your story—how do you feel about it, now that it is done?"

"Hopeless," he answered, quickly. "It is a wretched feeling. There is a kind of sadness about it which no mere worldly success, for the story itself, could take away, even if that could be hoped for. It is just as I say—these came to me, broke through my world's sky; I knew them and loved them, felt impelled to write about them what I have written, but it seems a poor thing now that it is done; all falls so utterly below what it ought to be that it seems an offence against spiritual friendship by which one hopes to profit, in the gross fashion of this world, and, though there is little likelihood, in this case, of that, yet the offence seems to be the same. They turn away now, and leave me to my poor satisfaction; and it is poor indeed. I see well enough that even the best of our art cannot suffice to detain those fleeting spirits. The art which could do that perfectly would be too fine, perhaps, for our work-day world; it

would never believe in it. We are forced to please, however, and so all art must be only failure to those who see beyond, whatever it may seem to be to those who do not see."

"Well, it is strange," said Mrs. Winchell; "strange beyond all I ever dreamed. Do you know, Arthur, that the strangest part of your story is yet to be told?"

For answer Arthur only looked at her, wondering what she could mean. She went on: "Incomprehensible as it is, you have written the very story I had intended, some time, to tell you—about the flower there." And she glanced at the volumes already described, which had the flower stamped upon their covers. "You have changed the names and given it all a modern setting, but in all the main incidents it is simply a history connected with our own family; it is literally true."

"Our own family?" said Arthur, looking bewildered; "true?"

"True, yes; this man you have written of as Harringford was really your own grandfather, your father's father, Henry Winchell, and Evelyn Weir was Margaret Peyton, your own grandmother.

"All this that you have told, really took place, and that flower, there, on your father's books, is the memory-flower; and now, I will show you the very one you have described, the history of

which I feared to tell you and which you have already told."

Arthur said nothing at all. He was stupefied by the revelation.

Mrs. Winchell crossed the room, and opened the secretary which had been her husband's. Unlocking a small drawer, she took out of it a leathern-bound volume, and brought it to the light.

Arthur looked on intently as she turned the faded leaves.

"There," she said, "that is the memory-flower; your father never allowed it to be disturbed. It was from his mother, your Evelyn Weir, that he heard the story of it."

The flattened, colorless petals were pressed into the page until they seemed to be a part of it.

Arthur looked at it, long and steadily. "Yes," he said, "that is it." That was all he said.

His emotions were such as must be imagined. Once, he drew his breath quickly, as if about to speak, but said nothing. He had glanced at the top of the page, and saw that the book was opened at the Song of Solomon.

He watched his mother as she carefully put the book away, and then sat down in silence, his mind overwhelmed with a flood of conjectures.

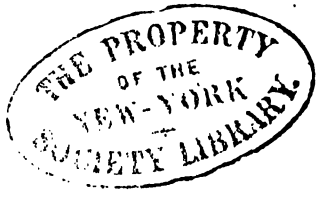
"Come, Arthur, dear," he heard his mother saying, and he felt her hand laid, caressingly, on

his head. "Come—do you know it is nearly morning?—we have sat the night out."

"He was right, mother," Arthur said, rising, "father was right, then, perhaps, after all." He picked out one of the volumes and opened it, resting it upon the table, and bending over it eagerly, turning the well-known leaves until he came to the page he sought.

His finger moved along the margin, and stopped, pointing out the closing sentence of an essay upon "Thought and Consciousness."

"See, mother, don't you remember this?" And he read the sentence, "Perhaps, then, much of our thought is but a legacy from the past; a transmitted memory; an inherited experience. The soul's to-day is but the meeting ground of Memory and Hope—the ever-shifting moment which divides the yesterday of the soul from the soul's to-morrow."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